

## RIGHT GONE AWRY

“We broke, tearing back pell-mell ... in full, breathless flight”

Charles Teague

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It would not be long after the Civil War that Pickett's Charge would be heralded as an iconic moment in American history. The imagery of that heroic and fabled assault across nearly a mile of exposed ground was so powerful, the consequences so momentous. Yet what really happened?

More than two decades after the battle, one of General Robert E. Lee's key staff officers lamented that “the attack of [George E.] Pickett's division of the 3d has been more criticized, and is still less understood, than any other action of the Gettysburg drama ... Pickett's Charge has been made the subject of so much discussion, and General Lee's intentions in ordering it have been so misunderstood. ...”<sup>1</sup>

Federal participants heartily recounted their experience and vividly described how they blunted the attack, won the victory, and assured the preservation of the Union. Northern historians, most notably John Badger Bachelder, wove their accounts into an unforgettable panorama of battle. But that comprehensive understanding was fundamentally flawed, according to the Confederate commander leading the right of the attacking column, Brigadier General James L. Kemper: “It is obvious from [Bachelder's] own showing that ninety-nine hundredths of his material is drawn from northern sources; that the great body of facts on the Confederate side must of necessity be excluded because unknown and inaccessible to him. ...” Kemper's assessment was that the “facts expounded or implied” by Bachelder “in reference to the movements of my division and brigade are almost wholly imaginary and mythical.”<sup>2</sup>

What did Lee intend in his plan of battle for July 3? What was the right wing of the attacking column supposed to do? How was the right flank to be protected? What went wrong? These are the issues addressed in this paper.

Lee was consistent in explaining that his battle plan for July 3 did not vary in principle from that of the previous day: “The general plan of attack was unchanged. ...”<sup>3</sup> Important adjustments would have to be made. But as observed by Prussian officer Justus Scheibert, a guest at army headquarters, in the Battle of Gettysburg, “Lee pursued a grand design.”<sup>4</sup>

The commanding general's intention for the second day of battle had been for Lieutenant General James Longstreet to make “the principle attack ... partially enveloping the enemy's left, which he was to

drive in.”<sup>5</sup> Longstreet’s men were to swing around and “sweep down the enemy’s line in a direction perpendicular to our then line of battle.”<sup>6</sup> Brigadier General Joseph Kershaw explained that “the directions were ‘to dress to the right and wheel to the left.’ This was the language. I understood it to mean that we were to swing around as we could, towards the left ...”<sup>7</sup>

It was a challenging maneuver for a company to accomplish on uneven ground and under fire, much more so for a brigade. Barksdale had received a similar directive, the general order being “‘to swing to the left’... and push them towards Gettysburg.”<sup>8</sup> Longstreet was then to be supported by Anderson’s division of A. P. Hill’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps with the purpose to drive the Yankees “towards Gettysburg.”<sup>9</sup> So concerned was Lee in how the flow of the assault would continue that he had personally instructed Brigadier General Cadmus Wilcox, commanding the lead brigade in Major General Richard H. Anderson’s segment of the charge, to maneuver so as “to strike the enemy’s flank when I advanced.”<sup>10</sup>

The outcome of the second day’s attack did not reach the climax that Lee had hoped for, but he was pleased that “Longstreet succeeded in getting possession of and holding the desired ground. ...”<sup>11</sup> That key ground was the Emmitsburg road ridge, which could be used both as an artillery platform and as concealment for infantry forces staged for a follow-up attack.

Longstreet was grieved in losing so many good men that day, but the attitude at army headquarters that night was upbeat. Lee’s assessment was that with one more day’s fight, “we should ultimately succeed.”<sup>12</sup> Historian Jacob Hoke described the scene there as “cheerful,” with the commanding general declaring, “everything is all well.”<sup>13</sup> Lee perceived that the Army of the Potomac was staggered, up against the ropes, and that victory was within his grasp. As he later explained, he felt that victory that day “would have been gained could one determined and united blow have been delivered by our whole line.”<sup>14</sup> It was not a faulty plan of battle, in his estimation, but unfortunate lapses in execution had occurred. Even Longstreet, who much disagreed with the old man’s assessment, admitted, “When the battle of the 2d was over, General Lee pronounced it a success ...”<sup>15</sup>

Though Longstreet had serious misgivings, Lee did not perceive the Yankee line to be impregnable. He would later comment that he “did not consider the Federal position at Gettysburg stronger than many others that army had occupied ... The notion of its great strength has grown up since the battle.”<sup>16</sup>

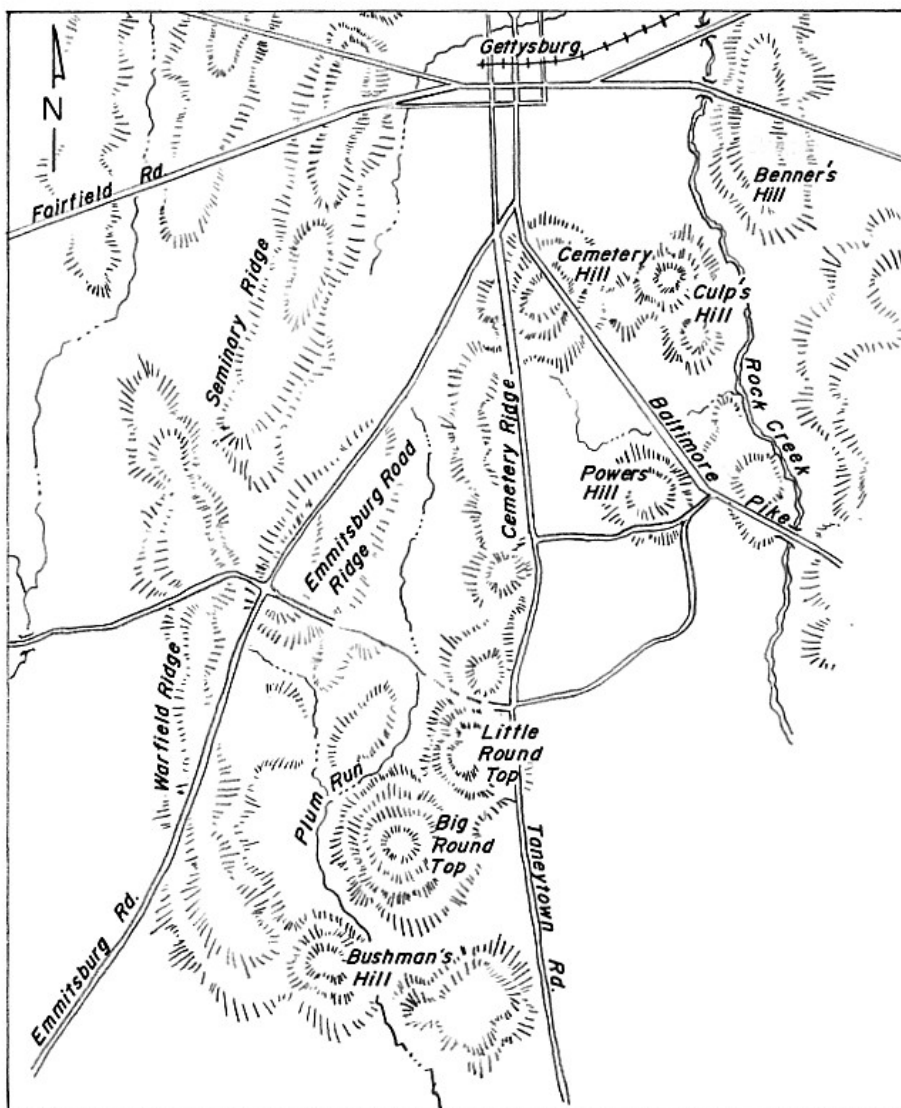
Peter, as Longstreet was fondly called, did not go to see his commanding general the night of July 2, contrary to his customary practice after a day’s fight. He may have been reluctant to hear any plan to renew the attack. After the war he would reference “the absence of orders,” such that he felt at liberty to explore alternative possibilities.<sup>17</sup> However, that claim was seemingly contradicted by the officer he had chosen to oversee placement of his corps artillery for the next day. Colonel E. P. Alexander said that evening, “I then found General Longstreet, learned what I could of the fortunes of the day on other parts of the field, and got orders for the morning. They were, in brief, that our present position was to be held and the attack renewed as soon as Pickett arrived. ...”<sup>18</sup> Yet Longstreet was disturbed at the prospect of attacking Cemetery Hill directly.

Early on July 3 Lee took the initiative to contact Longstreet, who acknowledged the commanding general “rode over after sunrise ...”<sup>19</sup> As Peter had feared, the old man declared that he was “determined to continue the attack.”<sup>20</sup> Longstreet was crestfallen upon receiving the order to “renew the attack against Cemetery Hill,” which he then described as “probably the strongest point of the Federal line.”<sup>21</sup> He balked at the idea, using storied language that no 15,000 men ever assembled for battle could take that hill. Lee retorted in an emphatic way, “pointing with his fist at Cemetery Hill: ‘The enemy is there, and I am going to strike him’.”<sup>22</sup> It was, to say the least, a vigorous discourse between two generals with quite different views as to how the battle ought to be fought. But only one was in command of the army.

Lee and his staff were optimistic, seeing the plan as holding “promise of success.”<sup>23</sup> Yet Longstreet was particularly concerned about the idea of throwing his two bloodied divisions back into the fray again so soon. Colonel Walter Taylor wrote that the mode of attack and the units to take part were “thoroughly debated.”<sup>24</sup> Colonel A. L. Long explained that “the original intention of General Lee was that Pickett’s attack should be supported by the divisions of [Lafayette] McLaws and [John Bell] Hood.”<sup>25</sup>

What has not often been appreciated in histories of the battle is that Lee did not intend that McLaws and Hood would simply start from where they had left off their attacks the night before, at the base of the Round Tops and in the Wheatfield. As Colonel Taylor explained, “One of the divisions of Hood and McLaws, and the greater portion of the other, could be *removed out of the line* and be made to take part in the attack.”<sup>26</sup> Colonel E. P. Alexander likewise explained that the initial plan involved most of those two

divisions first to be “*taken away*, to be placed in column with Pickett,” further referencing them being “*withdrawn*” from the position they had achieved on the late afternoon of July 2.<sup>27</sup> Colonel Benjamin Humphreys, who had assumed command of Barkdale’s brigade, likewise wrote that the initial plan involved having “*withdrawn* McLaws and Hood”<sup>28</sup> (emphases added).



Key terrain on the July 3 battlefield. Map by John Heiser.

In strident response to this proposed tactic, Longstreet made an even more pointed objection. He argued that “twenty thousand men ... would follow *their withdrawal*,” and having done so, would be able to “strike the flank of the assaulting column, crush it, and get on our rear toward the Potomac River ...”<sup>29</sup> (emphasis added). Here the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps commander now expressed in particular his fear for the right flank in Lee’s attack plan. This concern struck a chord that Lee pondered. He too seemed wary of what might happen, but was not prepared to change his concept for the assault. And so it was that “the apprehensions of General Longstreet” persuaded Lee, who would not budge from his continuing plan, to use elements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps instead to bolster the attack by Pickett’s fresh division against Cemetery Hill, thus sparing Hood and McLaws from the main attack.<sup>30</sup>

This would not be a new plan of battle, but rather a substitution of the forces to be used in the attacking columns. Indeed, as Colonel Taylor explained, despite Longstreet’s protests it was nevertheless “determined to adhere to the plan of attack” that Lee had envisioned. However, Longstreet would instead be “reinforced by [Major General Henry] Heth’s division and two brigades of [Major General William

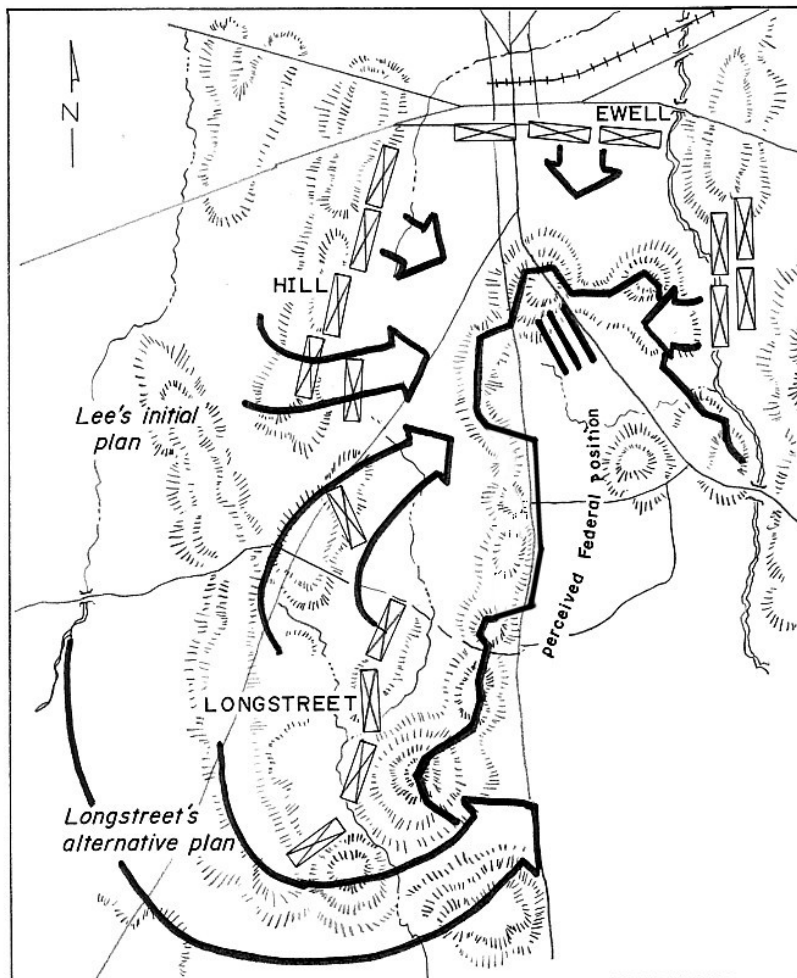
D.] Pender's, of Hill's corps. These with his three divisions, were to attack."<sup>31</sup> Lee felt confident that the assigned units under Pickett, Brigadier General J. Johnston Pettigrew [commanding Heth's division], and Brigadier General Isaac R. Trimble [commanding Pender's division] would be "strong enough to carry the enemy's lines."<sup>32</sup> Even after the battle Lee reputedly expressed "the strongest conviction" that the plan, properly executed, "would have succeeded in overthrowing the Federal army."<sup>33</sup> According to Alexander, Pickett reflected Lee's confidence and was "entirely sanguine of the success in the charge and was only congratulating himself on the opportunity."<sup>34</sup> In fact, Alexander candidly admitted, "like all the rest of the army I believed that it would all come out right, because Gen. Lee had planned it."<sup>35</sup>

In formulating his battle plan, Lee had throughout held to his overall goal: to dislodge the Yankees. "The assault to be made directly at the enemy's main position, the Cemetery Hill."<sup>36</sup> Longstreet noted how "the point of attack [was] carefully designated."<sup>37</sup> Lee had assigned the units for the column of assault. He had already alerted Major General J. E. B. Stuart to position himself on the left of the army where he could look for the opportunity to get into the rear of the routed Yankees as they would be fleeing down the Baltimore Pike. Having confirmed the general plan of attack, attention would now need

to be given to details. Colonel Long wrote of the mature consideration made to prepare for the attack.<sup>38</sup>

Artillery targets had to be identified. Colonel E. P. Alexander had been tasked by Longstreet to oversee placement of 1<sup>st</sup> Corps artillery. He explained that "early in the morning General Lee came around, and I was then told we were to assault Cemetery Hill, which lay rather to our left."<sup>39</sup> Fire from all three corps was to be focused upon "Cemetery Hill and the ridge extending toward Round Top, which was covered with batteries."<sup>40</sup> This required Alexander to make adjustments. Longstreet raised a particular objection that "the guns on Round Top might be brought to bear on his right. Colonel Long of Lee's staff responded that the guns on Round Top could be suppressed by our batteries."<sup>41</sup>

Lee was satisfied how "the positions gained on the right would enable the artillery to render [support for] the assaulting columns. ..."<sup>42</sup> Now he not only had platforms to the west, northwest, and northeast to fire



Lee's initial plan and Longstreet's alternative plan, early morning, July 3. Map by John Heiser

upon Cemetery Hill, but from the southwest as well. Never before had Lee had such an opportunity to bring such heavy concentrated fire against a Yankee position. Colonel E. P. Alexander revealed that his orders were, "first, to give the enemy the most effective cannonade possible. It was not meant simply to make noise, but to try & cripple him – to tear him limbless, as it were, if possible. ... 'drive off the enemy or greatly demoralize him.' When the artillery had accomplished that, the infantry column of attack was to charge."<sup>43</sup> It would be a *feu d'enfer*, a Napoleonic-style hell fire. The expectation was that it would



have “the desired effect of driving the enemy’s off, or having other effect such as to warrant us in making the attack.”<sup>44</sup>

The right of the column of assault would become the responsibility of Virginia-born Brigadier General James L. Kemper. Though not formally educated for command, he had been a captain in the Mexican War, had chaired the committee on military affairs in the Virginia legislature, and had been an administrator at the Virginia Military Institute. Though a politician, he had proved himself a gallant commander and well inspired his men. Of all the eleven brigades immediately tasked for the assault, his may have had the most treacherous assignment. Vulnerability to the right of the attacking column was an understandable concern even if Hood and McLaws held their position. Rebel skirmishers in that sector were thus directed to “to drive the Federal Skirmishers ... as far as they would go.”<sup>45</sup> Barksdale’s brigade on the front of McLaws’s division was to push back enemy pickets “from 6 to 800 yards,” while those of Hood’s division “advanced their pickets to the front of Round Top.”<sup>46</sup>

At one point, still relatively early in the day, Lee and Longstreet dismounted and walked down the eastern slope, likely from near the Klingel house on the Emmitsburg road, to get a closer look at the Federal position. An officer on the picket line was startled to see the two generals alone and exposing themselves to enemy skirmish fire.

My company [C, 18<sup>th</sup> Mississippi], with others, was occupying the extreme front picket line in direct range of the sharpshooters. Adjutant Harmon, of the 13<sup>th</sup> Mississippi, and I were hugging a pile of rubbish, anything to hide behind, that we had thrown together, when Gens. Lee and Longstreet—on foot, no aids, orderlies, or couriers, fifteen or twenty steps apart, field glasses in hand—came walking past us, stopping now and then to take observations. They were arranging as we soon found out, for the famous charge of Pickett’s division. As Gen. Lee halted in a few feet of us, knowing the imminent danger he was in, one of us said, ‘Gen. Lee, you are running a very great risk.’ At that moment the searching Minnie was cutting close to him, showing that he was the mark aimed at. He went on with his observations as calm and serene as if he was viewing a landscape. A few minutes afterward we heard him [Lee] say to Longstreet, in substance, ‘Mass your artillery behind that hill,’ pointing to a ridge just in our rear, ‘and at the signal bring your guns to the top of the ridge and turn them loose’. It put us to thinking of what would become of us—the picket line.<sup>47</sup>

One young officer thereafter observed that “about 8:00 A.M. Generals Lee, Longstreet, and Pickett, in company, then rode slowly up and down in front of the long lines of prostrate infantry, viewing them closely and critically as they rode along.”<sup>48</sup> Longstreet in fact acknowledged that “General Lee rode with me twice over the lines to see that everything was arranged according to his wishes.”<sup>49</sup> Though Longstreet was in operational control of the attack, it was Lee’s plan to be executed.

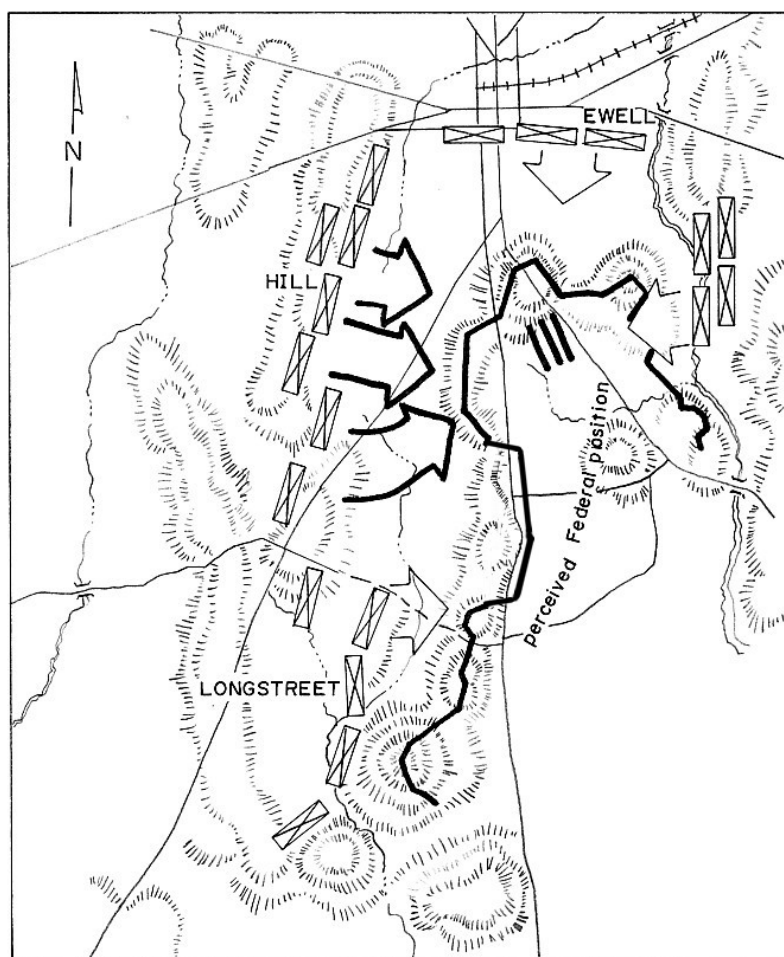
Lee chose to direct the offensive “against the enemy’s left center.”<sup>50</sup> According to one of Pickett’s colonels, the commanding general believed this was “the weakest point in the line.”<sup>51</sup> Appreciating the location of this section of the Federal line is important in understanding Lee’s expectations. Colonel A. L. Long described this “weak point” as being “where the ridge, sloping westward, formed the depression through which the Emmitsburg road passes.”<sup>52</sup> Brigadier General George Stannard’s Vermont Brigade held this section of the Northern line, one that was to be struck first in an effort to unhinge the Federal position.

It wasn’t simply a matter of comparatively low ground there that created vulnerability for the Federals. Brigadier General Henry Hunt, chief of artillery under Major General George G. Meade, explained that from the Federal 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps south toward Little Round Top – the so-called shank of the fish-hook – was “not a straight line.” He went on to describe how, “about 900 yards from the north end our crest line turns, near a small grove, to the east, [it] runs from 150 to 200 yards towards our rear and then resumes the southerly direction ... the southern part” of the ridge. Hunt noted that it created in the line “a decided re-entrant.”<sup>53</sup> Hunt further identified “the wooded salient” at a cluster of trees on a knoll where Stannard held his men, the “salient to the left & rear of which was McG.’s brig. ...”<sup>54</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Freeman McGilvery had guns to the back left of Stannard, but with little infantry support. Major General John Newton, at this point commanding the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps, revealed that “on the morning of the third I found that our line thence to the Round Top was very incomplete” and had “empty spaces” that would have to be

filled. It took till “about noon” to fill it out with troops from the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps, and batteries from the Artillery Reserve.<sup>55</sup>

During his early-morning personal reconnaissance Lee doubtlessly recognized this vulnerability at Stannard’s salient. Success could well be achieved, according to Colonel Long, by “forcing the Federal lines at that point and turning toward Cemetery Hill.” That would have the effect of taking Stannard “in flank.”<sup>56</sup> Brigadier General William Pendleton, Lee’s chief of artillery, likewise noted the opportunity by which the Confederate “right, especially, was, if practicable, to sweep the enemy from his stronghold on that flank.”<sup>57</sup> Use of the descriptive word “flank” by two of Lee’s key staff officers indicates the tactics by which the enemy line was to be struck. It was not to be a frontal assault. Moreover, as the attack drove toward the Cemetery Hill, “the remainder [of the Federal guns] would be neutralized as its fire would be as destructive to friend as to foe ...” So it was that “General Lee determined to attack at that point.”<sup>58</sup> Pendleton described the intent of the plan to involve “sweeping the enemy from his position. ...”<sup>59</sup> Though the attack would involve other elements and other points in the Federal position, it would be crucial for the right of the assault column under Kemper to strike this weak point if the enemy line was to be rolled up.<sup>60</sup>

The grand salient of the Federal line, wrapped as it was around Cemetery Hill, would be the ultimate objective for the attack. It could be assaulted in multiple directions by artillery and then infantry. Lee



Lee's Adjusted Plan. Main column of attack by Pickett immediately followed by that of Pettigrew, supported by other forces. Map by John Heiser

intended to dislodge the Federals from this decisive ground. As Longstreet realized, the fruit of the offensive would likely be plucked not by Pickett’s division, but by Hill’s corps in their phase of the assault. Elements of the Rebel army to the left of Pickett were to strike the crowning blow and then pursue the routed Yankees, but only after the right wing had done its crucial work. Pickett’s men, initially concealed in their staged position behind the Emmitsburg road ridge, were to be the surprise *coup de main*. But, as Colonel Benjamin G. Humphreys well appreciated, “Pickett’s Charge was made against Cemetery Hill at least one mile to the left of Longstreet’s ‘front’ ....”<sup>61</sup> It was not a simple thing to start where Pickett would be deployed and swing under fire toward the hill for, as Brigadier General Cadmus M. Wilcox observed, “the Cemetery was a near mile from Pickett’s left.” He was less persuaded that the plan could work, “as Pickett’s left [Gen. Richard Garnett] was to be the center of the column of attack, the difficulty, if not impossibility, of executing his orders is obvious, the salient being the Cemetery.”<sup>62</sup>

The right wing under Pickett was boldly to initiate the infantry charge. Colonel E. P. Alexander reported that he learned the offensive “was to be led by Pickett’s division and directed on Cemetery Hill.”<sup>63</sup> Then the left wing in the assault, led by Major General James Pettigrew, would advance “in short

echelon.”<sup>64</sup> Pettigrew, according to his aide-de-camp, would move up “as soon as possible” on Pickett’s left, eventually to join with Pickett in the attack.<sup>65</sup> But, as Longstreet clarified in his official report, “General Pickett’s line [was] to be the guide” upon which other troops in the action would engage.<sup>66</sup> Later he would reiterate that “General Pickett’s was the division of direction.”<sup>67</sup> It is not misleading nor disparaging to the divisions of Pettigrew and Trimble and the demi-division of Wilcox, all to be in crucial support roles, to call the assault “Pickett’s Charge.”

Pickett’s two-brigade front would need to swing left about 45 degrees from its initial deployment in order to head toward the objective. This would be similar to the directions given for the charge on the previous day. Wilcox particularly noted that “the direction” was “towards what was called by the Confederates on that part of the line, the Cemetery.”<sup>68</sup> The left wing (led by Pettigrew) would by contrast be headed straight across the fields until its right flank joined with Pickett’s left. Pickett’s commanders, having the more challenging route, would need guiding points so as to swing far enough around, but not too far. Two set objectives would be the red-brick Codori homestead and a conspicuous clump of trees. Major Walter Harrison, Pickett’s inspector general, explained that his division’s attack was directed “at the highest point and apparent centre of the enemy [where] a small clump of trees made the enemy’s centre a prominent point of direction.”<sup>69</sup> After the war Longstreet would explain to a Federal officer that the guiding point was Zeigler’s Grove.<sup>70</sup> Whether the clump was the Copse or Zeigler’s Grove is not today a settled issue among historians, and conceivably might have been an uncertain matter for Pickett, Kemper, and Garnett, as well as for Brigadier-General Lewis A. Armistead. Nevertheless, starting where they did and then properly swinging toward Cemetery Hill, both clumps of trees should have been in their path.

If the Federal artillery could be silenced, the actual path for Pickett’s Charge would not be difficult. They would benefit from “a more gradual slope affording opportunity for success against Cemetery Hill.”<sup>71</sup> Moreover, Longstreet anticipated that “about half way between our position and that of the enemy, a ravine partially sheltered our troops from the enemy’s fire, where a short halt [could be made] made for rest.”<sup>72</sup> This ravine was a branch of Plum Run, reaching from the Codori-Trostle thicket across the Emmitsburg road just south of the Codori homestead. It meanders in a southeasterly direction before heading south through the thicket. The axis of this ravine in relation to the road and the Federal line is a key to appreciating how Pickett was intended to approach the enemy position. Cadmus Wilcox explained that “the surface between the point from which Pickett began his advance, and the town of Gettysburg, rises up in several slight ridges, the direction of which is at right angles to the road.”<sup>73</sup> That would have the right wing under Pickett, taking advantage of the terrain, making an oblique attack, not a frontal assault, against the Federal line on Cemetery Ridge.

There would be two additional advantages gained from this axis of attack. Zeigler’s Grove would partially obscure the sightline of the imposing enemy batteries on Cemetery Hill. Moreover, those guns would have to fire at distance over their own men.

One thing is important to note: Properly executed, this plan would *not* constitute a frontal assault by Pickett, but rather an oblique attack, much to be preferred.<sup>74</sup>

Nevertheless, there was understandable concern expressed about the right of the attacking column that, in advancing, Kemper’s brigade on the right would not be unduly hammered. As referenced earlier, menacing Federal guns on Little Round Top were to be taken out by Rebel batteries. They were not. To protect the column from a countermove by Federal infantry, two precautions were also to be taken.

One precaution to protect Kemper was explained by Colonel Walter Taylor, based upon the early-morning conversation between Lee and Longstreet. “The remaining divisions [Hood and McLaws] were to have been moved forward in support of those in advance. This was the result of the conference alluded to, as understood by me.”<sup>75</sup> Longstreet explained in his memoirs that “the divisions of McLaws and Hood were ordered to move closer lines for the enemy on their front, to spring to the charge as soon as the breach at the centre could be made.”<sup>76</sup> McLaws vehemently rejected the idea he was to have any particular role in support of the offensive. Yet there are indications that a role for Longstreet’s two other divisions had indeed been contemplated. Prior Gardner Veazy, a soldier in Brigadier General Henry L. Benning’s brigade, Hood’s division, wrote in his diary that “orders came at 10 o’clock to press the Yankees all along the line.” However, Veazy also noted it was thereafter “countermanded as it would have been madness to charge the heights opposite our Brigade.”<sup>77</sup> Major General Abner Doubleday reported that the Rebels had indeed sought to freeze in position the left of the Northern line: “A portion of

Longstreet's corps. Benning's, [Brigadier General Jerome B.] Robertson's, and [Brigadier General Evander M.] Law's brigades, advanced against the two Round Tops to prevent reinforcements from being sent from that vicinity to meet Pickett's charge."<sup>78</sup> Henry Alexander Wright, a professor of history at Washington and Lee College at the turn of the century, shared his understanding that "Hood and McLaws were to keep the Federal left wing engaged and to make an advance when the opportunity came. ..."<sup>79</sup>

A more immediate precaution, explained Lee, was that "Wilcox's brigade marched in rear of Pickett's right, to guard that flank."<sup>80</sup> Colonel Taylor similarly explained that "Wilcox's Brigade was ordered to support Pickett's right flank."<sup>81</sup> Wilcox would himself explain that he had "orders to advance to the support of Pickett's division."<sup>82</sup> Wilcox would be augmented by the small Florida Brigade, under Colonel David Lang, who had "received orders from General Anderson to connect my right with General Wilcox's left, and conform my movements during the day to those of his brigade. I was at the same time notified that I would receive no further orders."<sup>83</sup>

One issue seems not to have been clearly resolved: What would be the cue for Wilcox to move forward? Major Walter Harrison said that Wilcox "was to join in with Heth's division as it passed" on the left.<sup>84</sup> An officer in Pettigrew's division, however, argued that these Alabamians and Floridians had orders "that when twenty minutes had elapsed after the line had started they were to march straight ahead and repel any body of flankers who should attack the right."<sup>85</sup> A third explanation was offered by Major Moxley Sorrel, of Longstreet's staff, that the call would be left to "Pickett [who was] to watch his right and if necessary to move some troops in for meeting such an attempt."<sup>86</sup> Yet perhaps most puzzling is the post-war assertion by Wilcox himself that he had "no knowledge" of any plan for his brigade to support Pickett. "It was not intended that I should join in the attack, as I had been heavily engaged the afternoon preceding, and had sustained serious loss. I did not know against what point the attack was to be directed."<sup>87</sup>

Longstreet asserted that Lee "gave no orders or suggestions after his early designation of the point for which the column should march."<sup>88</sup> Apparently, from mid-morning on, Lee would simply await the cannonade and the follow-up infantry assault that Longstreet was to initiate. Major Sorrel explained that "the attack was to be made as soon as possible."<sup>89</sup> In that case, Lee apparently did not feel a need to follow up with the man to whom he had entrusted operational control for the assault and who had been thoroughly instructed on what needed to be done.

Alexander had been working throughout much of the night to position his batteries, taking but a couple hours of sleep, and then had to make adjustments at early dusk when he realized his guns along Emmitsburg Road would be subjected to enfilade fire from Cemetery Hill. Cautiously he pulled those batteries back. Incredibly, he admitted to taking "9 hours – from 4 A.M. to 1 P.M. ... getting ready at our leisure."<sup>90</sup> Leisure! Neither he nor Longstreet evidenced any urgency. One of the Rebels commented three decades after the war, "from some cause, I never knew what, the morning was permitted to wear away without movement on our part."<sup>91</sup>

Wilcox and Lang had assumed their position in support of those batteries around 4:30 A.M., "between daylight and sunup."<sup>92</sup> Pickett's division, having arisen at 3 A.M., would be in staging position within several hours and fully deployed by 10 A.M.<sup>93</sup> Kemper's brigade had led the march. Lieutenant William N. Wood of the 19<sup>th</sup> Virginia estimated that they then waited in position five hours.<sup>94</sup> Chaplain John C. Granberry of the 11<sup>th</sup> Virginia, the second regiment from the very right, acknowledged that "those quiet hours of just waiting were very tiring."<sup>95</sup> There was a lot of delay, uncomfortable waiting that was never adequately explained, to start an assault supposedly to be made as soon as possible. Longstreet would offer a bland excuse: "care and time should be taken to give the troops the benefit of position and the grounds," while at the same time confessing that he really didn't want to do it anyway.<sup>96</sup>

Longstreet said the troops were to be put "under the best cover during the artillery combat," but in reality all they could hope for was concealment in the fields and orchards of the Spangler and Sherfy farms on the back slope of the Emmitsburg road ridge.<sup>97</sup> The men had stooped in moving into position with their flags furled, and for hours would lie in the field. They lay "perhaps three hundred feet from the crest" and, except for a few who benefited from fruit trees, simply waited in the hot sun.<sup>98</sup> One of them later complained, "the day was intensely hot, and lying in the sun we suffered greatly from the heat."<sup>99</sup> The right of the line, the 24<sup>th</sup> Virginia, on the very flank, was staged behind the Sherfy homestead. Colonel W. H. Swallow calculated that "from Pickett's right to the left of General Stannard's left

regiment was 1,350 yards [more than 4,000 feet].”<sup>100</sup> That distance was thought necessary for Kemper’s men to be able to wheel left and successfully strike Stannard’s flank.

The artillery segment of the attack began at 1:07 P.M., later than had been expected. Lee succinctly wrote, “General Longstreet’s dispositions were not completed as early as was expected.”<sup>101</sup> The delay was never satisfactorily explained and would be a point of contention for years.<sup>102</sup> It would be but one of several consequential missteps by the Army of Northern Virginia that day.

Though Alexander had initially estimated that the cannonade would achieve its desired results in “about ten minutes” or “in ten or fifteen minutes,” it took much longer before the Federal guns began to slacken in their counter-battery fire.<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile Federal shot and shell caused havoc among Kemper’s men. Longstreet seemed surprised when told by Kemper that “a man is cut to pieces here every second while we are talking, sometimes a dozen killed by one shot.”<sup>104</sup> One of Kemper’s men, Private David E. Johnston of the 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia, described their position on the right as “a trying one, indeed; much more so than had we been engaged in close combat, and quite as perilous ... we were target practice for the Union batteries. To the left of my position, and not thirty feet away, eight men were killed or wounded by one shot. ...”<sup>105</sup> Another in that regiment, Sergeant Catlett Coway, recalled how his “men are being struck, arms, legs, and heads are being shot off, men are knocked up from the ground and their mangled bodies hurled across their living comrades.”<sup>106</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia, positioned in the center of Kemper’s brigade, suffered likewise, with men “bleeding and gasping the agonies of death all around.”<sup>107</sup> The same plight befell the 3<sup>rd</sup> Virginia of the brigade, where “nearly every minute the cry of mortal agony was heard above the roar and rumble of guns.”<sup>108</sup> Private Johnston felt confident that “not less than 300 of Pickett’s men were killed or injured by artillery fire.”<sup>109</sup> Others in the line were undoubtedly affected by heat exhaustion and fear.

Kemper’s men suffered the most during the cannonade. Not only was this thoroughly demoralizing, but once the line would close up to advance it would be like having lost an entire regiment before taking their first step in the charge. Little did the men then appreciate that such significant shrinkage in their line would make it doubtful that in the arc of their advance they could strike the enemy line where Lee intended.

Just prior to the cannonade, assignments in Kemper’s division had been made for “a detail of fifteen men from each regiment made to act as skirmishers. ...”<sup>110</sup> They would need to position themselves quickly. By one account, “before the smoke of the guns should have cleared away the attacking column was to be started.”<sup>111</sup> That seemed not to have happened. Perhaps there was a necessary delay as the skirmishers deployed. One of those men, Private Howard Malcolm Wathall of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Infantry, described how they were ordered forward when the firing ceased, spaced “five paces apart” and descending “on a gently sloping hill.”<sup>112</sup> There was a limit to how fast the men could move out, explained Kemper, “for the men were greatly exhausted by the sweltering heat and the terrible artillery fire to which they had been so long exposed.”<sup>113</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Stribling, one of Lee’s artillerists, described what he called “a great blunder ... Instead of close cooperation between the two arms of the service, as was ordered, the battle was divided into two separate and distinct parts – the first fought by artillery without any infantry, and the second by infantry alone, without any artillery.”<sup>114</sup> One consequence of this was further delay. “I have talked with many of the artillerists of the corps, and with all with whom I have talked had been impressed with the long time that elapsed after the artillery fire virtually ceased, before the infantry advanced.” Stribling regretted that “the protracted cannonade [caused] the exhaustion of ammunition, and the long interval of time (so precious to the enemy and so well utilized by him) before the assaulting column was put into motion were an all-sufficient cause for the failure of General Lee’s expectations.”<sup>115</sup>

But that was not the only problem. Longstreet explained that the plan was that the artillery was “to pour a continuous fire upon the cemetery. Under cover of this fire, and supported by it, Pickett was to charge.”<sup>116</sup> Longstreet had instructed Alexander to “advance such artillery as you can use in aiding the attack.”<sup>117</sup> Major James F. Crocker observed that batteries being “pushed forward as the infantry progressed” was particularly intended to assure that the guns could “protect their flanks.”<sup>118</sup> The image presented by Colonel Stribling was that “guns to the right and the left” advancing with the assaulting column “could have kept up uninterrupted fire upon Hancock’s line and in rear of it.” In this way Federal “reinforcements sent to it would have had to face an artillery fire as destructive as the fire Pickett and Pettigrew passed through in reaching the hill.”<sup>119</sup> To assure this, Alexander had reserved “seven 12-

pounder howitzers, belonging to the Third corps, under Major [Charles] Richardson, which I put in reserve in a selected spot, intending them to accompany Pickett's infantry in the charge to have the advantage of fresh horses and men and full chests of ammunition for the critical moment."<sup>120</sup> It wasn't to be. Chief of Artillery William Pendleton had removed these pieces, probably nine of them, to a safer location during the cannonade, and Alexander could not find them when he needed them. He rued the loss of a "brilliant opportunity" for their use.<sup>121</sup> Thus, even before the men of the right wing took their first step, the plan was going awry.

Part of the confusion may have stemmed from doubt as to who was actually in charge of which guns. Brigadier General Pendleton was but a staff officer at headquarters, but as noted did not hesitate to give orders; indeed, there is evidence that Lee that day had given him "charge of the reserve artillery ammunition of the army."<sup>122</sup> Alexander actually was but third in rank among artillerists in the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps. Yet Captain Robert Bright said that the order came from headquarters that "Colonel E. P. Alexander will command the entire artillery in action to-day."<sup>123</sup> Was that to be all the artillery? Or just that of the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps? Alexander felt it was the latter, becoming upset when he saw that some 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps guns stood idle during the cannonade.<sup>124</sup> Longstreet said that "Colonel Alexander had posted our batteries and agreed with the artillery officers of the other corps upon the signal for the batteries to open," but that his corps chief of artillery, Colonel Walton, "was ordered to open the batteries."<sup>125</sup> After the war, Longstreet seemed to declare that Alexander was in actual operational control of his corps batteries that day, but upon remonstrance from Colonel Walton, he responded, "It is true that in part of my first narrative there were sentences subject to the erroneous impression that Colonel Walton was not in full command of the artillery of the First corps at the battle of Gettysburg. My orders, however, as well as my instructions, quoted in another part of the narrative, were addressed to Colonel J. B. Walton as Chief of Artillery, and show conclusively that he was in command on that day."<sup>126</sup> So maybe Alexander was simply serving as a staff officer. Who knows? Participants didn't seem to agree, and Longstreet contradicted himself, so it is hard for us to know for sure. The crucial point is that artillery support was particularly important to protect the right flank of Pickett's Charge, yet it was largely absent when most needed (perhaps only five pieces did advance).<sup>127</sup>

Longstreet was quite distressed and frantically directed Alexander: "Go and stop Pickett right where he is, and replenish your ammunition."<sup>128</sup> Alexander replied that there was too little ordnance immediately available and that while efforts were being undertaken, the enemy would likely recover. It was not something that Longstreet, already in a foul mood, wanted to hear. The battle plan was collapsing before the first infantryman had stepped forward. Major James Dearing later said that of his sixteen guns, "every round of ammunition was fired out & no more could be obtained. ... The supply was completely exhausted."<sup>129</sup>

If Alexander was befuddled by the situation involving his own artillery, he was especially so in regard to the Federal guns. As has been noted, he expected to disable them with fifteen minutes of concentrated fire. In perhaps an hour of hell fire, this still didn't seem to be happening. Then, almost despairing, Alexander noticed two things of consequence: "The enemy's fire suddenly slackened materially, and the batteries in the Cemetery were limbered up and were withdrawn."<sup>130</sup> Alexander was "elated," believing that the Rebel batteries had finally achieved their goal. But he was misled on both accounts. The three batteries on Cemetery Hill, eighteen guns, were simply being redeployed by Major Thomas Osborn, the Federal 11<sup>th</sup> Corps chief of artillery. And Brigadier General Henry Hunt, chief of artillery for the entire Army of the Potomac, had ordered the cessation of fire to conserve ammunition before the anticipated infantry charge. This would not bode well for any of the Rebels, but the plight of those on the flanks would become dire.

The Confederate *coup de main*, the power stroke of the attack, would consist of a two-brigade front (Garnett and Kemper) bolstered by Armistead. Because Kemper on the right had a larger arc to cover in the advance, it was imperative that his men be prompt. It would not be so. Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Peyton, 19th Virginia Infantry, described how, "at 2:30 P.M. the artillery fire having to some extent abated, the order to advance was given, first by Major General Pickett in person, and repeated by General Garnett. With promptness, apparent cheerfulness and alacrity, the brigade moved forward at quick-time."<sup>131</sup> Garnett, who had just rejoined his brigade, may not have understood the implications of how the attack would need to be made. Kemper would be delayed, though not of his own fault. When the artillery fire slackened, "I looked up and saw that Garnett and Armistead were already in line apparently ready to

advance, and it was evident that they had received the order to advance before it was communicated to me.”<sup>132</sup> Though Pickett had communicated the order directly to Garnett, it was through “a staff officer of Pickett [who] brought the order to advance.” To Kemper’s dismay, Garnett and Pickett [Armistead], who were on my left, they got the start of me.”<sup>133</sup>

Kemper would find complications continuing to mount. The losses sustained during the cannonade required that his lines be formed and closed up prior to moving forward. Dressing to fill the gaps caused by the loss of more than 300 men would mean that some men would first shift left a hundred yards before advancing. The 24<sup>th</sup> Virginia was on the far right and would have the most ground to cover in adjusting. Captain W. W. Bentley explained, “When our artillery ceased firing Col [William] Terry gave the order to prepare to advance, which was promptly obeyed. The first movement was by the left flank to the depth of a regt. & then by the front.”<sup>134</sup> As Garnett advanced, possibly already at the quick-step, Kemper was still forming his line.

Kemper finally got his column moving, headed eastward. He could see that there was a “considerable interval” created between his line and that of Garnett, and even as he got under way it was “apparently increasing.”<sup>135</sup> His men would actually have to “march over” Wilcox’s men and also over skirmishers from the 18<sup>th</sup> Mississippi of Barksdale’s brigade, now led by Colonel Humphreys.<sup>136</sup> Major Walter Harrison commented that Pickett’s men initially headed “straight on the enemy’s front.”<sup>137</sup> Brigadier General Stannard observed how “the charge was aimed directly upon my command.”<sup>138</sup> That was the crucial weak point in the Federal line that Kemper’s men had to envelop as they turned toward Cemetery Hill. Also observing from that point was Stannard’s division commander, Major General Abner Doubleday, who testified, “This charge was first directed toward my lines.”<sup>139</sup> However, though it had been expected that Kemper would encompass that position, it couldn’t happen, especially since he was simultaneously supposed to be connected to Garnett while turning toward the high ground. Brigadier General Cadmus Wilcox observed Pickett’s men crossing through his own line headed forward and then beginning to turn left.<sup>140</sup>

It wasn’t long before one of Kemper’s skirmishers, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant John T. James of the 11<sup>th</sup> Virginia, saw that things were already going askew. “By some mischance the line of battle, instead of following us, obliques to the left, and by the time they came on a line with us we were on their right instead of being immediately in front.”<sup>141</sup> Part of the problem doubtless came in the difficult effort to swing left. Wilcox described how Pickett’s men, after advancing through his own position, “then changed direction to the left by a wheel. ...”<sup>142</sup> A reporter for the *Richmond Sentinel*, in an article published July 13, similarly described how “as Kemper’s brigade moved up it swung around to the left.”<sup>143</sup> Captain S. A. Ashe, an assistant adjutant general in Pettigrew’s division, similarly noted how Pickett’s column, after crossing the Emmitsburg road ridge, “wheeled to the left and moved up towards Codori’s House.”<sup>144</sup> Private Howard Malcolm Wathall, Company D, 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Infantry, dutifully participated in the maneuver, “without knowing what movements meant [when] my part commenced turning to the left on the hillside.”<sup>145</sup> In what was variously described as turning, swinging, whirling, pivoting, and wheeling left, Pickett’s front line was being moved with the expectation of striking the Federal position with advantage, though it would have unintended consequences. It was described by Wilcox as a “difficult tactical movement,” involving hundreds of men – though had already been attempted in the battle in attacks by other Confederate divisions (such as the divisions of McLaws, Anderson, and Early).<sup>146</sup>

Some of the shifting leftward may have also resulted from frantic efforts by Kemper’s brigade on the right to catch up with Garnett well ahead on the left. There was no time or opportunity to complete the left wheel, as that would likely delay a juncture further. Kemper’s men also had to maneuver around the Klinge and Rogers homesteads, doubtlessly delaying them somewhat and confusing their line of battle. A Federal observer observed that as the enemy advanced they necessarily “contracted their front, and doubled or trebled their lines by reasons of the difficulties and obstructions on the march, thus having the appearances to some extent the formation of columns.”<sup>147</sup> Kemper’s rush in an effort to align with Garnett may have seemed like a left-oblique maneuver. It also may have given the appearance of three lines of battle, repeatedly noted by Yankee observers, for Kemper lagged behind Garnett, with Armistead closing in the rear.

A further point of confusion came with dressing, closing, and guiding on a brigade front. Private Ralph Shotwell explained, “In the morning orders were given to ‘dress to the left’... Afterwards Pickett’s men were instructed to ‘dress to the right;’ and as the others went to the left the interval grew larger as the

columns advanced ... Presently behind the hill a stentorian voice in heard giving the command – ‘FORWARD! – Guide on the Right – MARCH.’”<sup>148</sup> A soldier in the 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia also reported Kemper initially ordering, “‘Forward, march! Guide right!’ ... the clear, quick command of Kemper.”<sup>149</sup> But then Private Thomas R. Friend, a courier assigned to Pickett, described how he was told by the division commander “to ride down the line and tell commanders that the division should close to the left.”<sup>150</sup> Garnett’s brigade faced similar confusion, as related by Lieutenant Colonel Norbonne Berkeley of the 8<sup>th</sup> Virginia. “The order of dress had been, dress to the right on Kemper, and just as we were starting a horseman galloped up to Gen. Garnett and said, ‘The order is to dress to the left ...’” With hundreds of men on the march changing their dressing and closing from right to left, inevitable confusion occurred. When the directive got to Kemper, he responded, “I have not received it, but I will obey it, although I have received it unofficially.”<sup>151</sup>

Garnett, apparently concerned that the left of his line move toward the Codori house to assure the intended conjunction with Pettigrew, issued an order for a left oblique. Captain Henry R. Owen of the 18<sup>th</sup> Virginia recalled how “Half way over the field an order ran down the line, ‘left oblique,’ which was promptly obeyed and the direction changed forty-five degrees from the front to the left. Men looking away far off toward the left flank, saw that the supporting columns there were crumbling and melting rapidly away.”<sup>152</sup> Kemper may have likewise issued such an order for a left oblique, as he was trying desperately to align with Garnett. However, Captain John Holmes Smith, 11<sup>th</sup> Virginia, explained that it was the command to “close up and dress to the left ... [that] gave us an oblique movement to the left as we pressed ranks in that direction.”<sup>153</sup> Moreover, the 11<sup>th</sup> Virginia was feeling crowded by pressure from the 24<sup>th</sup> on the far right. They in turn were pushing left against the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia.<sup>154</sup> By this time it was becoming virtually impossible that the right of Kemper’s line could encompass Stannard’s salient in their advance, a crucial ingredient in the expected success.

Yankees observing were understandably puzzled by these peculiar shifts in the advancing Rebel line. Was it somehow intended to confuse them? A wheel? A flanking movement? An oblique maneuver? Captain John D. S. Cook, 80<sup>th</sup> New York, described how the Rebels “slightly changed direction by what is known in ancient tactics as ‘advancing the right shoulder.’”<sup>155</sup> Was all this the result of their own fire? Doubleday, Stannard, and others thought so.<sup>156</sup> But what was most serious for Pickett was the consequence for the right of the attacking column.

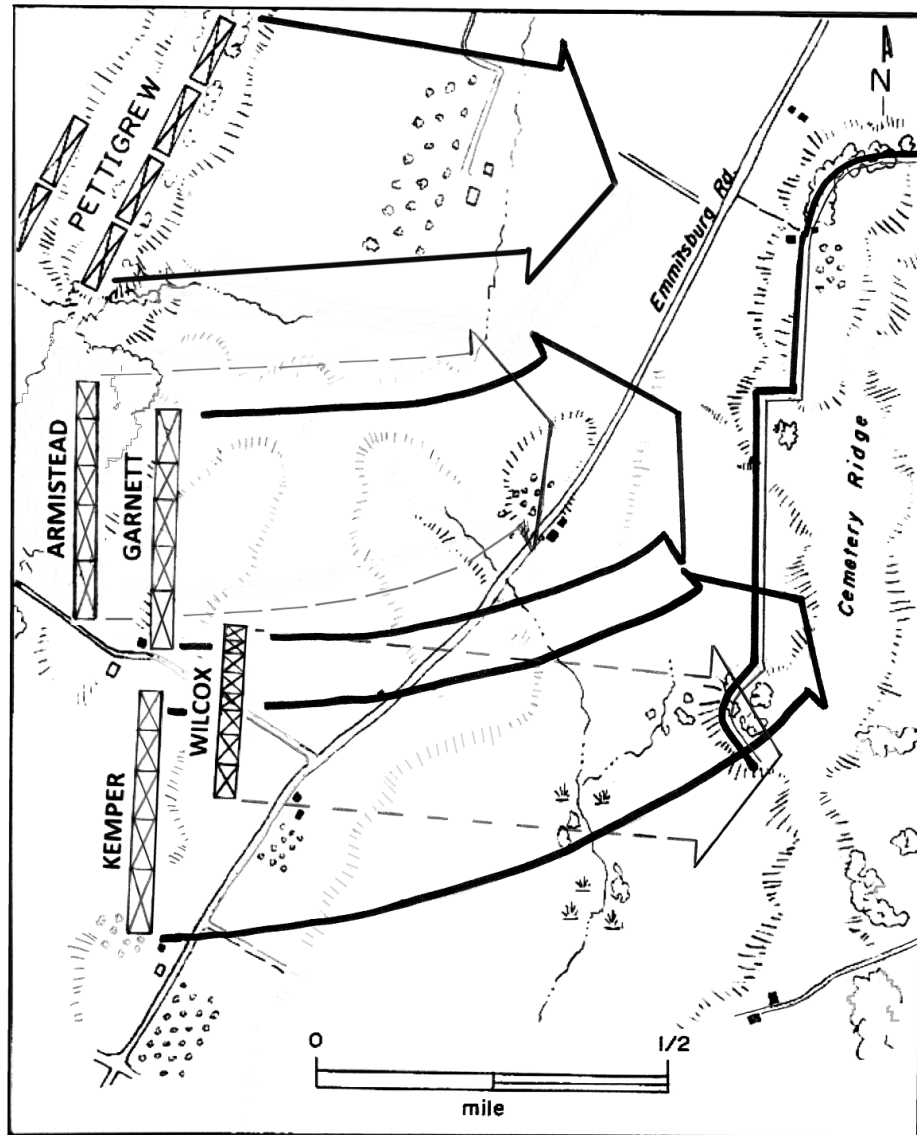
The correspondent for the *Richmond Sentinel* described how the shifting by Kemper’s men had exposed themselves to “flanking fire of the Federals, which was very fatal. This swinging around unmasked a part of the enemy’s force.”<sup>157</sup> A young officer in the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia was only too aware of the affliction his men were receiving from Union guns on their right since the right flank of Kemper’s brigade had begun to “curl forward.” The attempted left wheel caused Kemper’s line to become “diagonal compared with the Union position [which would] expose the right flank even more to enfilade artillery fire.” Lieutenant Edward P. Reeve, in the 11<sup>th</sup> Virginia, urged the 1<sup>st</sup>’s commander, Colonel Lewis B. Williams to change the direction of advance, but Williams replied, “I see the situation as well as you do, but I have my orders to obey, close your company to the left.” The commanders were doing their best to follow their instructions for the charge, but on the right it was becoming ever more difficult. Troubles were compounding. “Just then, Williams fell, mortally wounded.”<sup>158</sup> The shot and shell coming from their right was devastating, “fearfully destructive” in the words of a Rebel in the 56<sup>th</sup> Virginia. “One company, a little to my right, numbering thirty-five or forty men, was almost swept ‘to a man’ from the line by a single shell.”<sup>159</sup> A Federal soldier dramatically wrote of “our flaming batteries sweeping thousands away in the storm.”<sup>160</sup>

Major General George Pickett was to be superintending the column of attack, but apparently lost contact with commanders on the right. Major Kirkwood Otey, commanding the 11<sup>th</sup> Virginia, would later comment, “[I] never heard a positive statement as to where General Pickett was in that charge.”<sup>161</sup> Colonel Eppa Hunton, commanding the 8<sup>th</sup> Virginia, declared cynically, “No man who was in that charge was ever been found, within my knowledge, who saw Pickett during the charge.”<sup>162</sup> Nevertheless, the soldiers of his division continued their intrepid but increasingly futile advance.

Federal officers on Cemetery Ridge observed the relentless progress of the attack carefully. Major General Winfield Scott Hancock would later testify, “When the columns of the enemy appeared it looked as if they were going to attack the centre of our line, but after marching straight out a little distance they seemed to incline a little to their left, as if their object was to march through my command and seize



Cemetery Hill, which I have no doubt as their intention.”<sup>163</sup> Major General Oliver O. Howard saw “the point of attack” headed for “ground near Ziegler’s Grove. ... [as Pickett’s column] bore to its left and aimed for the Zeigler’s Grove front.”<sup>164</sup> Colonel Clinton D. McDougall, commanding the 111<sup>th</sup> New York, concurred. “The main point of attack was Ziegler’s Grove ... The crowding of the attacking party was from their right to left, showing conclusively that Ziegler’s Grove was the main point aimed at.”<sup>165</sup> The aide-de-camp of Major General Alexander Hays watched Pickett’s column “apparently moving in a direction that their left would envelop the left of our division ... their march on Zeigler’s Grove, which was immediately in front of the Cemetery Hill.”<sup>166</sup> The course of Pickett’s Charge was indeed to be



Confederate Tactical Plan, July 3. Infantry Attack by Right Wing. Map by John Heiser

headed via Zeigler’s Grove onward toward Cemetery Hill, but should have already begun sweeping the Federal line in that direction by rolling up Stannard’s flank. When that did not occur, it became evident to Longstreet that the plan was already collapsing.

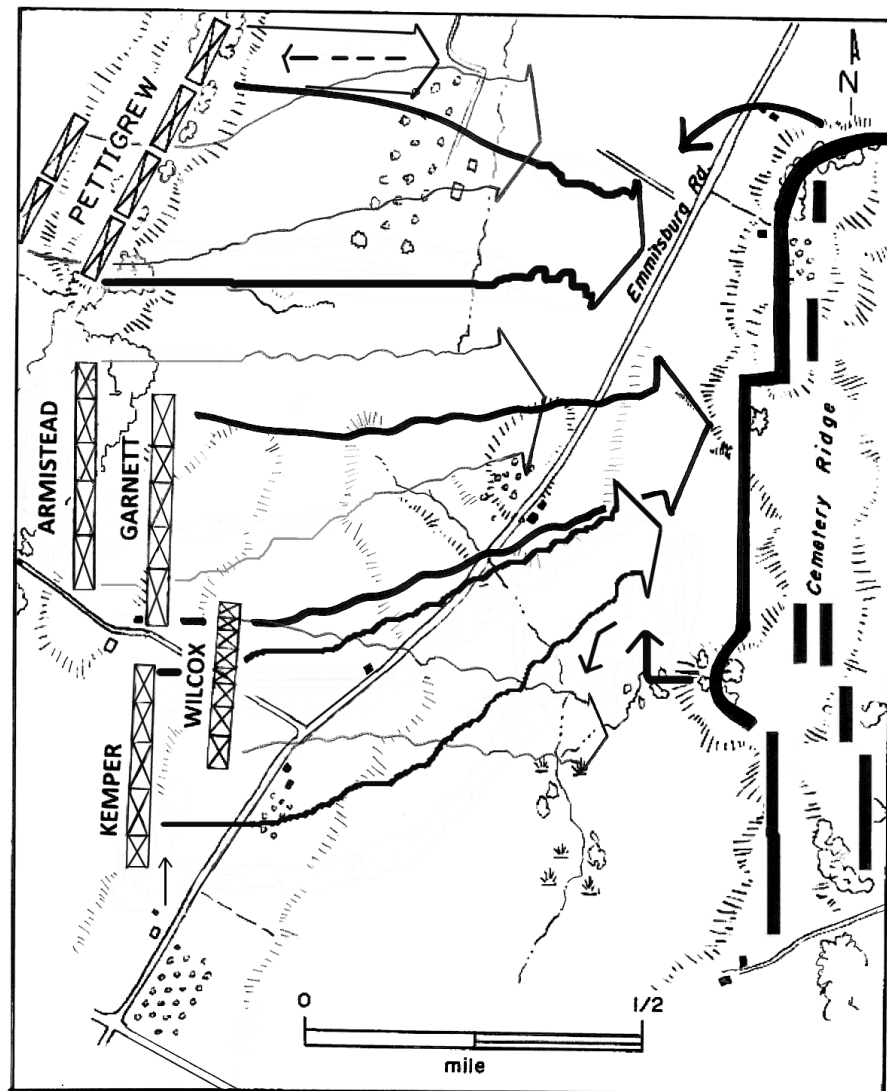
The turning of the column to the left had presented an unparalleled opportunity for the artilleryists on Little Round Top. The more Kemper sought to comply with his orders in wheeling left, the worse it

became for his men. Lieutenant Benjamin F. Rittenhouse, now commanding Hazlett's battery, described the advantage he had gained against them. "I watched Picket's [sic] men advance, and opened on them with an oblique fire, and ended with a terribly enfilading fire. ... Many times a single percussion shell would cut out several files and then explode in their ranks, several times almost a company would disappear, as a shell would rip from the right to the left among them."<sup>167</sup> A similar benefit was then gained by the Federal batteries along the line of Lieutenant Colonel Freeman McGilvery, who also fired obliquely upon Kemper's men.<sup>168</sup> Brigadier General Henry Hunt was thrilled at the growing opportunity given his artillerists and "rode down to McGilvery's batteries, and directed them to take the enemy in flank as they approached."<sup>169</sup>

It was "a most deadly fire," wrote one of Kemper's men shortly after the battle.<sup>170</sup> Captain W. T. Fry, assistant adjutant general for Kemper, watched woefully as "ranks were thinned at every step, and its officers were being rapidly cut down."<sup>171</sup> Shells "coming from our right" tore grievously into the advancing line. "This

fire soon became strictly *enfilading*, as we changed the point of direction from the center to the left while on the march, and whenever it struck our ranks was fearfully destructive – one company a little to my right, numbering 35 or 40 men, was along swept 'to a man' from the line by a single shell."<sup>172</sup> How much of this is exaggeration? It is hard to know for certain, as the devastation was so often described dramatically. A Federal officer, apparently viewing the havoc from Little Round Top, said he saw "great gaps ... made every second in their ranks."<sup>173</sup> U.S. signalman Louis R. Fortesque had a distant grandstand view from Jack's Mountain. "With my telescope I can scan this immense column ... hundreds of shells are bursting their ranks, the fire being concentrated on this charging

column. Scores of them can be seen going down under the cannonading, and they don't seem to be moving forward as confidently, or compactly, as when they first emerged from the woods. ... our artillery is fairly mowing them down."<sup>174</sup>



The Confederate Attack Falters, July 3. Map by John Heiser

As the Rebels in Pickett's division came closer to the enemy position, they were subjected to small arms fire as well. Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Peyton in Garnett's brigade described the fire the Rebels faced as "galling."<sup>175</sup> Kemper's men on the outside of the arc in the attempted left wheel became afflicted first by musketry fire.<sup>176</sup> Another officer watched as "frightful gaps were made from center to flank, yet on swept the column as it advanced the men steadily closed up the wide rents made along the line in a hundred places at every discharge of the murderous batteries in front."<sup>177</sup> It was not simply a matter of losing so many good men, but of the effect caused by the prescribed dressing and closing left. By this point in the charge there was no way that Kemper's brigade, still trying to keep up to Garnett, could possibly strike the Federal line at its supposed weak point. Captain Robert Bright, aide-de-camp on Pickett's staff, was alarmed to see the line of attack "apparently drifting too much to the left," but with no evident solution to correct the problem.<sup>178</sup> Rather than striking the Union line in such a manner as to roll it up, the Rebels were actually passing along the front of that line. The regimental historian for the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota described how "the main body [of the Rebel attack] kept moving perpendicularly to the Union line," almost like a shooting gallery.<sup>179</sup>

A Floridian in Lang's brigade who watched the affair speculated that the Virginians had "diverted to the left under the appalling fire from the tiers of infantry on the hills and from the artillery on the summits ..."<sup>180</sup> The crowding leftward may have in part been due to the understandable human desire to move away from danger. Moreover, the Rebel attack was by now beginning to lose any true line of battle. As one Federal officer described it, "Pickett's separate brigade lines lost their formation as they swept across the Emmitsburg road, carrying with them their chain of skirmishers. They pushed on toward the crest, and merged into one crowding, pushing line, many ranks deep."<sup>181</sup> A fellow officer in blue noted how the Rebel attack experienced a "crowding to the left by the men in that part of the column ... The brigades composing their division had become amalgamated, and, losing their formation, were merely a mass of struggling men."<sup>182</sup> A colonel observing from Little Round Top watched as the Rebels "huddled round their colors and advanced in disorder ... in no line of battle, but a mob."<sup>183</sup> Another Yankee observer said that by this time, the Rebel colors, rather than denoting any line of battle "are together like a little forest, but the men dropping like leaves in the autumn."<sup>184</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discern why the Rebels had not dealt with the formidable line of Federal guns that had augmented McGilvery's own batteries in that sector. Perhaps there really wasn't much of a line there when Lee and Longstreet took their reconnaissance and set their tactics. Perhaps the guns were not so easily seen due to morning mist, shadows, the glare of sun, or intervening trees and crops. Perhaps there had been effective Yankee efforts at cover and concealment. Perhaps there were lapses in reporting, or poor staff work, or confusion as to who was responsible. Perhaps the Rebels actually tried to take out those guns but did not realize they had failed. Altogether there were likely some forty-two Yankee cannons bringing devastating fire into the right of the Confederate column.

At some point in the advance, Kemper realized that he could no longer seek to coordinate his movements with the rest of the division, but would have to fight on his own hook. "I know almost nothing, however, of what was done in Garnett and Armistead's brigades, after we got near the enemy, as my attention was absorbed by my own command."<sup>185</sup> Circumstances for his men became dire once it became apparent not only that they had failed to strike the Federal line at the "weak point," but that the Yankees were now turning that to their advantage. Stannard's men, having expected to be attacked directly, instead found the opportunity to become the attackers.

Colonel Theodore Gates watched as the Vermont skirmishers were driven back, but then as the Rebels came within the rifle range saw how they began shifting rapidly to their left.<sup>186</sup> One amazed Yankee told how "Pickett's massing of columns and merging to his left and our right opened a clear field in front of Stannard's brigade."<sup>187</sup> Major General Abner Doubleday wrote how Stannard's men then "poured in volleys of musketry which the enemy from their formation could not return. The result was that they huddled up towards the center and the impetus of the charge was lost."<sup>188</sup> Another Northerner observed how enfilading fire against the Rebel column, now coming as well from muskets and rifles on Cemetery Ridge, required Pickett's men to "change front towards us to lessen its effect."<sup>189</sup>

Stannard adroitly ordered the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Vermont to move out into the field and wheel right, catching Kemper in a horrific cross fire. Indeed, as Colonel Joseph C. Mayo of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia discovered, that force had nearly "penetrated to our rear."<sup>190</sup> Yet the tragic fate of the Rebel column of attack had already

been determined in how its right had been so afflicted. Stannard's initiative simply set the seal for the defeat. As one Yankee described it,

Hundreds fell at every discharge, and as Stannard's brigade struck the column on the left, the men crowded toward the centre; and before the stone wall, all alignment had disappeared [into] a great mass of men. ... no longer an organized force, with everyone in his place subject to the voice of command, and capable of an exertion equal to its numbers, but a broken and disorganized body, crowded together into a narrow space, where only a small part could make effective use of their weapons.<sup>191</sup>

Another Northern soldier explained how they "took deliberate aim and with a simultaneous flash and roar fired into the compact ranks of the desperate foe and again and again in quick succession until a dozen or more volleys had been discharged with deadly effect. We saw at every volley the gray uniforms fall quick and fast."<sup>192</sup> Still another would write, "the missiles strike right in their ranks, tearing and rending them in all directions."<sup>193</sup>

Kemper lamented, "My five regiments were quickly cut down to companies."<sup>194</sup> He himself was shot from his horse with what was thought to be a mortal wound. Colonel Mayo, his line having become "irregular," ordered his men to "face to the right" to deal with the new threat.<sup>195</sup> Kemper and his comrades found themselves hurled into what he mournfully called "the cul-de-sac of death."<sup>196</sup> In that "maelstrom," grieved a soldier in the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia, "as far as an individual could see, the army had all gone to pieces, cut to pieces."<sup>197</sup>

And what of the provision made to protect the right of the assaulting column from just such a threat? Pickett's brother and assistant adjutant general said it was "about one third of the way across the plateau, when it became evident that supports were greatly needed."<sup>198</sup> Recall that the brigades of Wilcox and Lang were to advance so as to guard the flank (though, as mentioned earlier, there was not agreement as to what was to be the trigger for this action). Wilcox understood where Kemper was expected to strike the Federal line, but had lost sight of him. E. P. Alexander explained how Pickett's "whole division seemed to melt away in the smoke."<sup>199</sup> One of Wilcox's soldiers likewise described how Pickett's division "had soon disappeared from my view."<sup>200</sup>

Pickett sent three couriers in quick succession with urgent messages to Wilcox ordering him to "to advance ... on Pickett's right." Wilcox claimed he then "moved at a double-quick step so as to be uncovered by Pickett's men as speedily as possible, so as to draw upon his own command a portion of the very heavy and destructive fire then directed solely on the former."<sup>201</sup> It is revealing to note that Wilcox did not expect to be engaged in small arms fire, but expected to be able to be "drawing upon my command a portion of the artillery fire to which [Pickett] was subjected, and creating a diversion, otherwise favoring his attack."<sup>202</sup> Though Pickett's division was mostly hidden in the smoke, Wilcox wrote how, "as they advanced, they changed direction slightly to the left, so as to cover in part the ground over which Pickett's division had moved."<sup>203</sup>

Wilcox headed to the point where he expected he could best protect Kemper, not realizing that Kemper's men unexpectedly had drifted quite a bit farther to the left. Major General Abner Doubleday observed, "In this onward movement the Rebel Brigades of Wilcox and Perry should have adhered closely to the main body, but when the latter moved north instead of facing in that direction the brigades kept on straight to the east. This left the flank of the charging column under Kemper without any support whatsoever."<sup>204</sup> By moving "straight ahead," there would be a "considerable gap" between the two brigades ... the two right brigades under Wilcox and Perry, kept straight ahead, leaving a considerable gap."<sup>205</sup> Stannard watched as "the enemy bore down upon his left, where with two regiments, he performed the same maneuver [as he had done against Kemper] and captured and killed almost the entire column."<sup>206</sup> Far from mitigating damage, Wilcox had inadvertently compounded it.

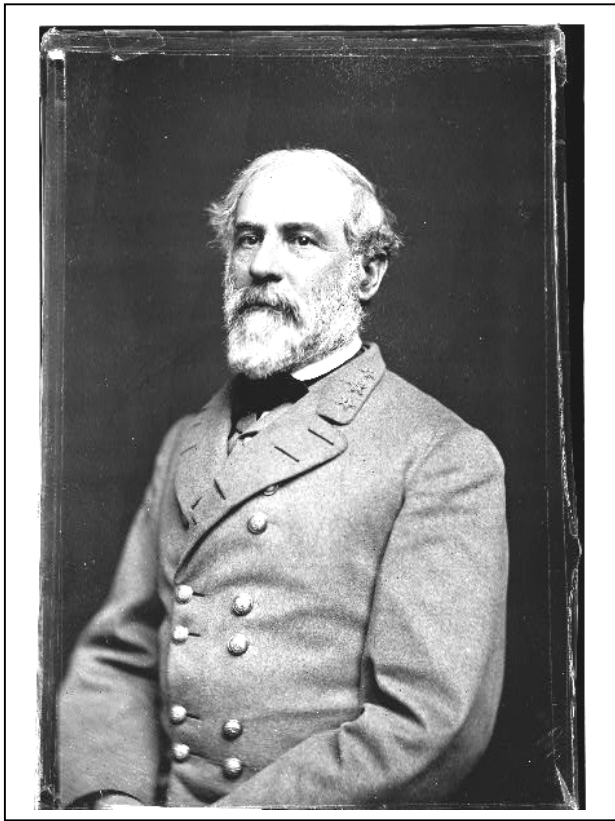
Whether McLaws' division could have or should have moved to support their comrades on the right was disputed after the war. Colonel Walter H. Taylor claimed, "had Hood and McLaws followed or supported Pickett ... the design of the Commanding-General would have been carried out – the world would not be so at a loss to understand *what was designed* by throwing forward, unsupported, against the enemy's stronghold, so small a portion of the army."<sup>207</sup> Major General Lafayette McLaws vehemently denied that charge. "I was not notified that it was in contemplation even to make any further attack by

either Hood's or my division ... I was not told to be ready to assist, should the assault be successful, nor instructed what to do should the assault fail and the enemy advance."<sup>208</sup> Longstreet agreed, declaring forthrightly, "it has been absurdly said that General Lee ordered me to put Hood's and McLaws' Divisions in support of Pickett's assault. General Lee never ordered any such thing."<sup>209</sup>

Some brave Confederate soldiers yet unscathed in the column of assault surged toward stone wall, but linear formations had been broken, and command and control had been lost. Armistead's men would gallantly seek to fulfill their mission, but "it was a desperate effort ... the final rush for the rock fence."<sup>210</sup> Kemper described "a great portion of the division being slaughtered; its strength being broken and destroyed."<sup>211</sup> All the brigades in the charge collapsed, not just those on the right. Lieutenant Colonel Freeman McGilvery described the "broken and confused masses, and fugitives fleeing in every direction."<sup>212</sup> The Yankees "cheered lustfully," for Pickett's Charge had proved to be a monumental fiasco.<sup>213</sup>

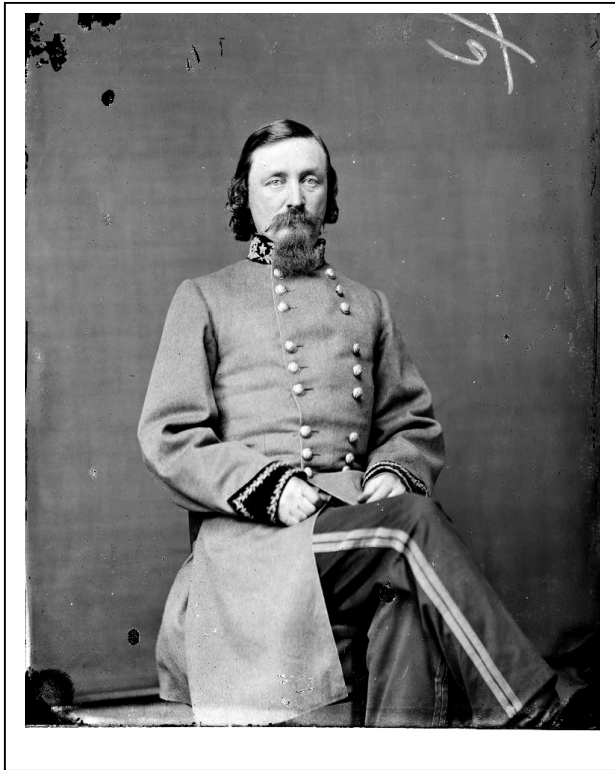
Was the attack doomed from the start? Several weeks after the battle Lee wrote to his president, "I thought at the time that [a victory] was practicable. I still think if all things could have worked together it would have been accomplished. But with the knowledge I then had, & in the circumstances I was then placed, I do not know what better course I could have pursued."<sup>214</sup> Not surprisingly, Longstreet to the day of his death held a contrary view, believing that "the assault by Pickett, on the 3d, should never have been made, as it could not have succeeded by any possible prodigy of courage or tactics, being absolutely a hopeless assault."<sup>215</sup>

Major General Jubal Early, always outspoken, responded after the war to the "proposition that 'The heroic but foolish attack of Pickett on the 3d, should never have been attempted,'" saying that such a proposition, "may now appear very plain in the light of what actually happened. We have in our country a homely saying of some backwoodsman, that, 'If a man's foresight was as good as his hindsight he wouldn't so often go wrong,' which has a vast deal of sound practical philosophy in it."<sup>216</sup> After nearly a century and a half of analysis, our hindsight is becoming ever clearer. We certainly understand now what Lee then did not. That which he thought to be a solid plan of battle had become a debacle, and the right of the attack having gone awry was a major factor in his defeat at Gettysburg.

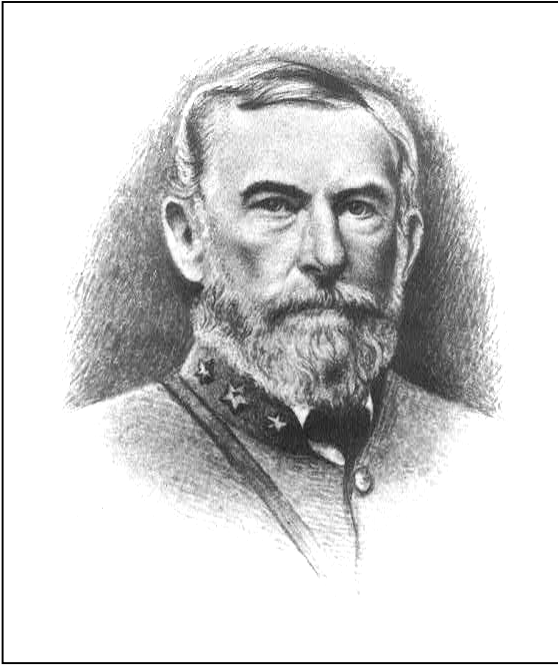


## DIRECTING THE OFFENSIVE

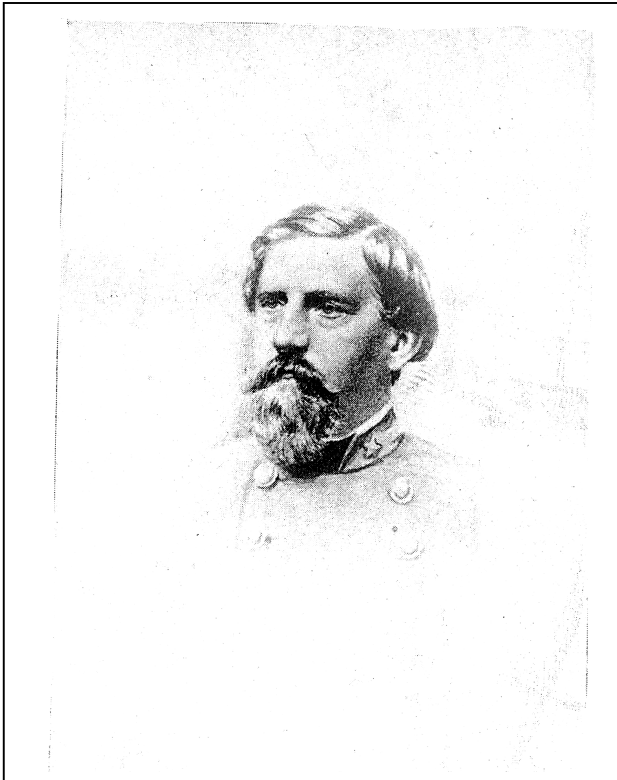
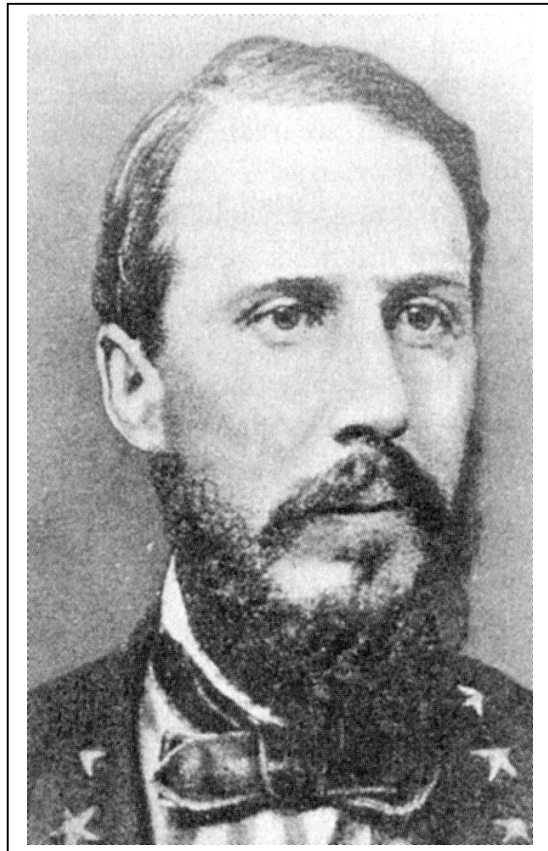
Clockwise from left, Lee,  
Longstreet, Pickett. LC



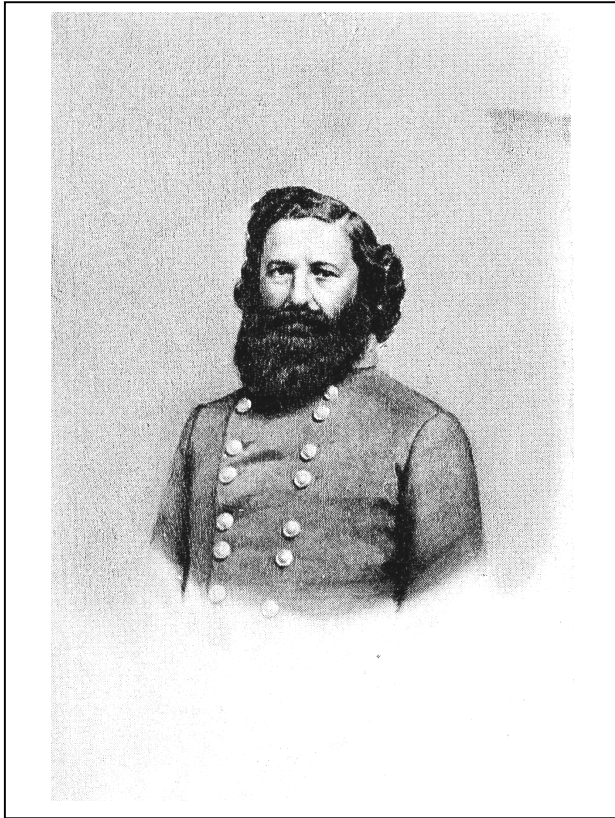
## COMMANDING THE ARTILLERY



Clockwise from left, Pendleton,  
Alexander, and Walton. LC and  
GNMP

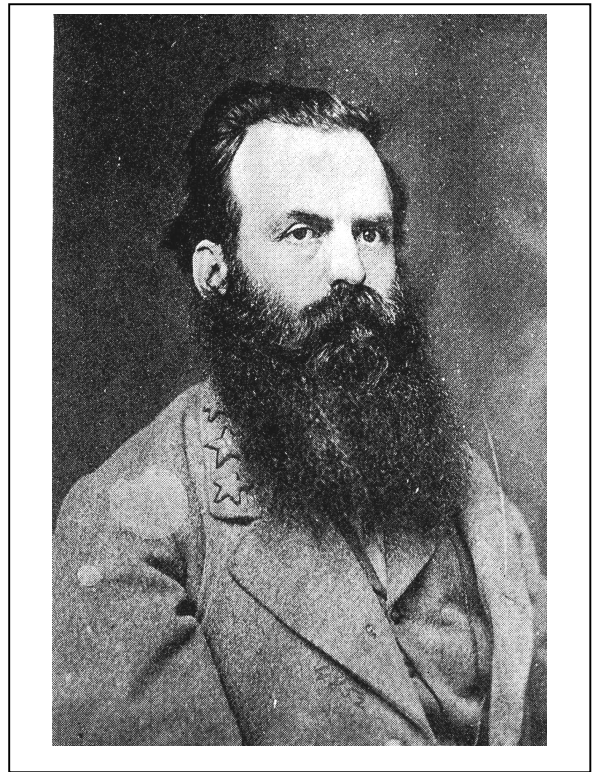
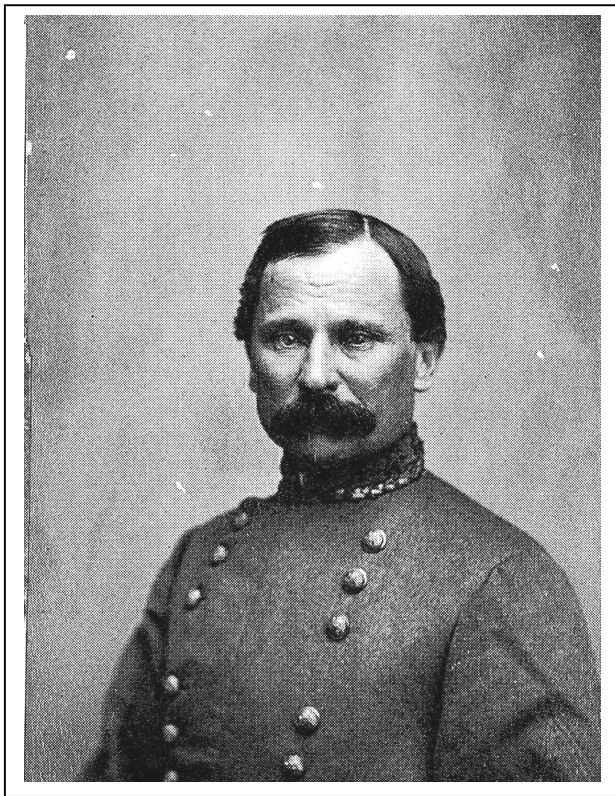






## COMMANDING ON THE RIGHT

Clockwise from left, McLaws, Kemper,  
Wilcox. LC.





- <sup>1</sup> A.L. Long, *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1886), 292. The subtitle of this paper comes from a quote by Longstreet's chief of staff: "It was soon over. Pickett's men got far up the acclivity and many were soon among the enemy. There was, however, some wavering on our left, which weakened us, and we broke, tearing back pell-mell, torn by shot and shell across that wide, bloody plain, a sight never before witnessed – part of the Army of Northern Virginia in full, breathless, flight." See G. Moxley Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*, ed. Bell Irvin Wiley (Jackson, Tenn.: McCowat-Mercer Press, Inc., 1958), 162-63.
- <sup>2</sup> James L. Kemper, letter to L. Stevenson, November 12, 1865, in David Ladd and Audrey Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1994), 1:224.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1885-1901). Series 1:27(1):308 [Hereafter cited as *OR*].
- <sup>4</sup> Justus Scheibert, *A Prussian Observes the American Civil War*, trans. and ed. Frederic Trautman (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 82.
- <sup>5</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):318-19.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.
- <sup>7</sup> Ladd and Ladd, 1:455.
- <sup>8</sup> Benjamin G. Humphreys, letter to Lafayette McLaws, Jan 6, 1878. GNMP vertical file 5-Barksdale
- <sup>9</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):614.
- <sup>10</sup> Cadmus Wilcox, "General Wilcox to the Rescue," *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, November 24, 1877, p. 1.
- <sup>11</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):308.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.
- <sup>13</sup> Jacob Hoke, *The Great Invasion* (1913; reprint, Gettysburg, Pa.: Stan Clark Military Books, 1992), 355.
- <sup>14</sup> Robert E. Lee, Jr., *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (1904; reprint, Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing, 1988), 102.
- <sup>15</sup> James P. Longstreet, "Lee's Right Wing at Gettysburg," in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 4 vols. (New York: The Century Co., 1884-1887), 3:342.
- <sup>16</sup> William Allan, letter to Rev. J. W. Jones, April 26, 1877, *Southern Historical Society Papers*, IV (2), August 1877, 80.
- <sup>17</sup> Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox* (New York: Mallard Press, 1991), 385.
- <sup>18</sup> Edward Porter Alexander, "The Great Charge and Artillery Fighting at Gettysburg," in Johnson and Buel, 1:360. Longstreet wrote two contradictory accounts of his own plan for July 3, asserting his intention to charge so as to turn the Federal left, yet also to prompt the enemy to make a risky attack against his position. "I had scouting parties out during the night in search of a way we might strike the enemy's left, and push it toward his centre." See Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 385. There was "an excellent opportunity to move around to the right of Meade's army and manoeuvre him into attacking us." See Longstreet, "Lee in Pennsylvania," in *Philadelphia Weekly Times, The Annals of the War Written by Leading Participants North and South* (1878; reprint, Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1988), 429.
- <sup>19</sup> Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 385. Sunrise would have been 4:45 A.M.
- <sup>20</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):318.
- <sup>21</sup> Longstreet, "Lee's Right Wing at Gettysburg," 342.
- <sup>22</sup> Longstreet, "Lee in Pennsylvania," 429.
- <sup>23</sup> Walter Taylor, "Memorandum by Colonel Walter H. Taylor of General Lee's Staff," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 4 (August 1877): 84.
- <sup>24</sup> Taylor, "The Campaign in Pennsylvania," *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, 312-313.
- <sup>25</sup> Long, 288.
- <sup>26</sup> Taylor, "The Campaign in Pennsylvania," 103.
- <sup>27</sup> Edward Porter Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, ed. Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 252.
- <sup>28</sup> Frank E. Everett, Jr., "Delayed Report of an Important Eyewitness to Gettysburg – Benjamin G. Humphreys," *The Journal of Mississippi History* 46, no. 4, (November 1984): 315.
- <sup>29</sup> Longstreet, "Account of the Campaigning and Battle," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 5 (1878): 54.
- <sup>30</sup> Taylor, *Four Years with General Lee* (New York: Appleton, 1878), 103.
- <sup>31</sup> Taylor, "Memorandum by Colonel Walter H. Taylor," 84-85.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.
- <sup>33</sup> Allan, letter to Rev. J. W. Jones, 77.

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- <sup>34</sup> Alexander, "The Fight at Gettysburg: The Confederate Assault on Cemetery Hill," *The New York Times*, July 29, 1881.
- <sup>35</sup> Earl J. Hess, *Pickett's Charge: The Last Attack at Gettysburg* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 27.
- <sup>36</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):359.
- <sup>37</sup> Cadmus Wilcox, "General C. M. Wilcox on the Battle of Gettysburg," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 4 (September 1878): 117-121.
- <sup>38</sup> Long, 287-94.
- <sup>39</sup> Alexander, "The Great Charge and Artillery Fighting at Gettysburg," 361.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.
- <sup>41</sup> Long, 288.
- <sup>42</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):320.
- <sup>43</sup> Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 245-46.
- <sup>44</sup> Alexander, "The Fight at Gettysburg."
- <sup>45</sup> Humphreys, letter to Major General Lafayette McLaws, January 6, 1878.
- <sup>46</sup> Everett, "Delayed Report of an Important Eyewitness," 314-15.
- <sup>47</sup> W. Gart Johnson, "Reminiscences of Lee and Gettysburg," *Confederate Veteran* 1 (1893): 246.
- <sup>48</sup> Henry T. Owen, "Pickett at Gettysburg," in *The New Annals of the Civil War*, eds. Peter Cozzens and Robert I. Girardi (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2004), 298.
- <sup>49</sup> Wilcox, "General C. M. Wilcox on the Battle of Gettysburg," 117-121.
- <sup>50</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):320. In simple fashion, a line of battle was envisioned as having five sectors: left, left center, center, right, right center.
- <sup>51</sup> Eppa Hunton, *Autobiography of Eppa, 1822-1908* (Richmond, Va.: The William Byrd Press, 1933), 90.
- <sup>52</sup> Long, 287-88.
- <sup>53</sup> Henry Hunt, letter to Bachelder, January 20, 1873, in Ladd and Ladd, 1:29.
- <sup>54</sup> Hunt, letter to Bachelder, August 22, 1874, in Ladd and Ladd, 1:440-441.
- <sup>55</sup> John Newton, "Further Reflections of Gettysburg," in Johnson and Buel, 6:267.
- <sup>56</sup> Long, 287-88.
- <sup>57</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):352.
- <sup>58</sup> Long, 287-88.
- <sup>59</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):352. Sweeping is a side-to-side motion, in contrast to pushing.
- <sup>60</sup> Major General Oliver Otis Howard would recognize that "Longstreet's troops on the right of his attacking column attempted to turn our left." See Howard, "Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg," *The Atlantic Monthly* 38 (July 1876): 48, 68.
- <sup>61</sup> Everett, "Delayed Report of an Important Eyewitness," 316.
- <sup>62</sup> Wilcox, "Letter from General C.M. Wilcox," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 4 (September 1877): 116-17.
- <sup>63</sup> Alexander, letter of March 17, 1877 to Rev. Jones, in *Southern Historical Society Papers* 4 (1877), 104ff.
- <sup>64</sup> Johnson and Buel, 343.
- <sup>65</sup> Louis G. Young, "Pettigrew's Brigade at Gettysburg," in *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1891-'65*, ed. Walter Clark (1901; reprint, Wendell, N.C.: Broadfoot's Bookmark, 1982), 124-25.
- <sup>66</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):359.
- <sup>67</sup> Longstreet, "Account of the Campaigning and Battle," 54ff.
- <sup>68</sup> Wilcox, letter to the editor, *The United Service* (New York: T.H.S. Hamersly, 1885), 8:379.
- <sup>69</sup> Walter Harrison, *Pickett's Men* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1870), 183. Neither Pettigrew nor Trimble nor their subordinate officers indicated that the clump of trees was for them an objective.
- <sup>70</sup> L. E. Bicknell, "Repelling Lee's Last Blow at Gettysburg," in Johnson and Buel, 3:391-92.
- <sup>71</sup> James Powell Smith, "Paper Read before the Southern Historical Society on April 4, 1905," in *Gettysburg Papers*, comp. Ken Bandy and Florence Freeland (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1978), 2:392.
- <sup>72</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):360.
- <sup>73</sup> Wilcox, *The United Service*, 8:379.
- <sup>74</sup> Baron de Jomini, who was in the Civil War era the primary interpreter of Napoleon, and whose works had been scrutinized by American military leaders, had emphasized that "as regards tactics, the principle thing to be attended is the choice of the most suitable order of battle for the object in view." The frontal attack – what he called the "parallel order" – is "worst of all." Moreover, "the oblique order is the best for an inferior force attacking a superior ..." See Antoine Henri de Jomini, *Jomini and His Summary of the Art of War*, ed. J.D. Hittle (Harrisburg: Military Service Publishing Co., 1947), 323, 188, 190.
- <sup>75</sup> Taylor, "The Campaign in Gettysburg," 312-313.

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- <sup>76</sup> Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 393.
- <sup>77</sup> Diary of Prior Gardner Veazy, *Confederate Reminiscences and Letters, 1861-1865*, (Atlanta: Georgia Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, 199), 12:28.
- <sup>78</sup> Abner Doubleday, *From Chancellorsville to Gettysburg* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), 187-98.
- <sup>79</sup> Henry Alexander Wright, *Robert E. Lee and the Southern Confederacy* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), 311.
- <sup>80</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):320.
- <sup>81</sup> Aland M. Hollingsworth and James M. Cox, *The Third Day at Gettysburg: Pickett's Charge* (New York: Henry Holt, 1959), PAGE.
- <sup>82</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):620.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 632.
- <sup>84</sup> Harrison, 91. William Balch, writing in 1885, envisioned Pickett in his charge was to be supported "on both flanks," i.e., that Pettigrew and Trimble would serve "for a like purpose" on Pickett's left, as what was assigned Wilcox and Lang "on his right." See William Ralston Balch, *The Battle of Gettysburg: An Historical Account* (Philadelphia: McLaughlin Bros., 1885), 82.
- <sup>85</sup> W. R. Bond, *Pickett or Pettigrew? An Historical Essay* (Scotland Neck, N.C.: W. L. L. Hall, 1888), 34.
- <sup>86</sup> Moxley Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*, ed. Bell Irvin Wiley (Jackson, Tenn.: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1958), 163-64.
- <sup>87</sup> Wilcox, *The United Service*, 378.
- <sup>88</sup> Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 388.
- <sup>89</sup> Sorrel, 162.
- <sup>90</sup> Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 246.
- <sup>91</sup> George W. Finley, "With Pickett at Cemetery Ridge," in *Under Both Flags*, ed. G. R. Graham (no city listed: Veteran Publishing: 1896), 306.
- <sup>92</sup> Wilcox, "General C. M. Wilcox on the Battle of Gettysburg," 117-121.
- <sup>93</sup> Though estimates on the time varied by as much as four hours, Hunton thought it was as early as 8 A.M. See Hunton, 89. 10 A.M. seems about the average.
- <sup>94</sup> William Nathaniel Wood, *Reminiscences of Big I*, ed. Bell I. Wiley (Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing, 1987), 43.
- <sup>95</sup> John C. Granberry, letter to John W. Daniel, March 25 1905, in the John W. Daniel Papers, filed in the University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.
- <sup>96</sup> Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 388.
- <sup>97</sup> Richard Rollins, *Pickett's Charge: Eyewitness Accounts* (Redondo Beach, Ca.: Rank and File, 2005), 19.
- <sup>98</sup> Robert McCullough, "The 'High Tide at Gettysburg'," *Confederate Veteran* 21, 10:373. A soldier in the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia, Kemper's brigade, estimated it as being "about seventy-five yards behind our artillery." See *St. Louis Daily Democrat*, July 22, 1863, p. 2. Another, in the 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia, estimated that the line was "four hundred yards or so back from the top, under the crest; the line formed somewhat obliquely to the Emmitsburg road in front of us, with the Confederate batteries on the crest four hundred yards or more in front of us." See David E. Johnston, "The Story of a Confederate Boy in the Civil War," (Portland, OR: Glass & Prudhomme, 1914), 203. The left of Armistead's Brigade was situated in Spangler Woods.
- <sup>99</sup> Finley, "With Pickett at Cemetery Ridge," 307.
- <sup>100</sup> Hoke, 372.
- <sup>101</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):320.
- <sup>102</sup> See, for example, Jubal Early and William Allan, "Causes of the Defeat of General Lee's Army at the Battle of Gettysburg – Opinions of Leading Confederate Soldiers," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 4, no. 2 (August, 1877): 60, 80.
- <sup>103</sup> Alexander, letter to Bachelder, May 3, 1876, in Ladd and Ladd, 489; Alexander, "Causes of the Confederate Defeat at Gettysburg," 107.
- <sup>104</sup> Kemper, letter to Alexander, September 20, 1869, filed in the Dearborn Collection of Civil War Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- <sup>105</sup> Johnston, 207.
- <sup>106</sup> Catlett Conway, "The Battle of Gettysburg," *Atlanta Journal*, December 7, 1901, GNMP vertical file.
- <sup>107</sup> Joseph T. Durkin, ed., *John Dooley: Confederate Soldier – His War Journal* (South Bend, In.: Notre Dame Press, 1963), 102.
- <sup>108</sup> Joseph Mayo, "Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 34 (1906): 330.
- <sup>109</sup> Johnston, 207.
- <sup>110</sup> Charles T. Loeher, "The First Virginia at Gettysburg," *SHSP* (from the Times-Dispatch Oct 16, 1904), 33.
- <sup>111</sup> Young, "Pettigrew's Brigade at Gettysburg," 114, 124.

- <sup>112</sup> Howard Malcolm Wathall, *Memoir* (unpublished), 28. GNMP vertical file 7-VA 1<sup>st</sup> Inf. A pdf file is available at [www.1stVirginia.com](http://www.1stVirginia.com).
- <sup>113</sup> Kemper, letter to Alexander, September 20, 1869.
- <sup>114</sup> Robert M. Stribling, *Gettysburg Campaign and Campaigns of 1864 and 1865 in Virginia* (Petersburg, Va.: Franklin Press, 1905), 67.
- <sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.
- <sup>116</sup> Longstreet, "Account of the Campaigning and Battle," 55ff.
- <sup>117</sup> Alexander, "The Fight at Gettysburg."
- <sup>118</sup> James F. Crocker, "My Personal Experiences in Taking Up Arms," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 33 (1905):120ff.
- <sup>119</sup> Stribling, 61.
- <sup>120</sup> Alexander, "Causes of the Confederate Defeat," 103.
- <sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>122</sup> Robert A. Bright, "Pickett's Charge," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 31 (January-December 1903): 228.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>124</sup> Alexander, letter to Bachelder, May 3, 1876, in Ladd and Ladd, 1:484.
- <sup>125</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):359.
- <sup>126</sup> "General Longstreet's Second Paper on Gettysburg," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 5, no. 6 (June 1878): 268-69.
- <sup>127</sup> Alexander said he urgently found "a dozen or so guns" that could support the advance of infantry. See Alexander, letter to Bachelder, May 3, 1876, in Ladd and Ladd, 1:490.
- <sup>128</sup> Alexander, "Causes of the Confederate Defeat," 108. See also See Alexander, letter to Bachelder, May 3, 1876, in Ladd and Ladd, 1:490.
- <sup>129</sup> Major James Dearing, letter to his mother, July 26, 1863, GNMP vertical file 7-VA Dearing's Battery.
- <sup>130</sup> Alexander, "Causes of the Confederate Defeat," 108.
- <sup>131</sup> Charles S. Peyton, "Garnett's Brigade at Gettysburg," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 3, no. 4 (April 1877): 215.
- <sup>132</sup> Kemper, letter to Col. W.H. Swallow, February 4, 1880, on file at United States Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA.
- <sup>133</sup> Kemper, letter to Alexander, September 9, 1869.
- <sup>134</sup> W. W. Bentley, 24<sup>th</sup> Virginia, July 9, 1863, GNMP vertical file. 7-VA 24<sup>th</sup> Inf.
- <sup>135</sup> Kemper, letter to Swallow, February 4, 1880.
- <sup>136</sup> Johnson, "Reminiscences of Lee and Gettysburg," 246.
- <sup>137</sup> Harrison, 95-97.
- <sup>138</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):349.
- <sup>139</sup> *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, at the Second Session Thirty-Eighth Congress: Army of the Potomac* (Washington, D.C., Doubleday, 1865), 309.
- <sup>140</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):620.
- <sup>141</sup> John T. James, "Storming Cemetery Hill: An Account of Pickett's Charge as Preserved in an Old Letter," *The (Philadelphia) Times*, October 21, year not specified, GNMP vertical file.
- <sup>142</sup> Wilcox, "Letter from General C.M. Wilcox," 116-17. A number of Federal observers would likewise note this left wheel. Winfield Scott, of Carroll's Brigade, wrote "A left half wheel was executed" (see 126<sup>th</sup> NY, "Pickett's Charge as Seen from the Front Line," May 4, 1884, Ken Bandy and Florence Freeland, ed., *The Gettysburg Papers* 2 [Dayton, OH: Morningside, 1978], 11-12); Albert Everett, of the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts: "Pickett's left wheel." (see "Harrow's Brigade at Gettysburg," n.d., GNMP vertical file B-46.); Sergeant Frederick Fuger of Cushing's Battery: "Pickett's command made there a left half-wheel" (see Frederick Fuger, "Cushing's Battery at Gettysburg," *Journal of the Military Service Institute of the United States* 41 [1907]: 408); Richard S. Thompson of the 12<sup>th</sup> New Jersey: "The column ... changed its direction by a partial wheel to the left (see "A Scrap of Gettysburg," in Ken Bandy and Florence Freeland, eds. *The Gettysburg Papers* 2, [Dayton, Oh.: Morningside Press, 1978], 105); Chaplain H.S. Stevens of the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut: "Kemper ... turns by half wheel" (see H. S. Stevens, *Souvenir of Excursion to Battlefields of the Society of the Fourteenth Connecticut September 1891* [Washington, D.C.: Gibson Brothers, 1893], 30); Henry Seymour Hall: "Pickett ... pivoting on his left" (see Henry Seymour Hall, "With the Sixth Corps at Gettysburg: A Paper Prepared and Read Before the Kansas Commandery," [Lawrence, Kan.: Journal Press, 1896], 16); Francis Amasa Walker: "... the brigades of Pickett, making a half-wheel to the left" (see Francis Amasa Walker, *History of the Second Army Corps* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886], 294); A local history written two decades after the war more dramatically described Pickett's men making a "whirl to the left" (see *History of Adams County Pennsylvania* [1886; reprint, Gettysburg, Pa.: Adams County Historical Society, 1992], 158).

- <sup>143</sup> “The Battle of Gettysburg, Rebel Accounts of the Fifth,” *St. Louis Daily Democrat*, July 22, 1863, p. 2, GNMP vertical file.
- <sup>144</sup> S. A. Ashe, “The Pettigrew-Pickett Charge,” *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1961-’65* (Goldsboro, N.C.: Nash Brothers, 1901), 141-42.
- <sup>145</sup> Wathall, p. 29.
- <sup>146</sup> Wilcox, *The United Service*, 379. Wilcox noted that Armistead had also sought to “make a change to the left by a wheel.”
- <sup>147</sup> David M. Earle, *History of the Excursion of the Fifteenth Massachusetts Regiment* (Worcester, Ma.: Charles Hamilton, 1886), 21.
- <sup>148</sup> Stephen D. Poole, ed., *Our Living and Our Dead* 4 (March-August, 1876): 90, 92.
- <sup>149</sup> “The Battle of Gettysburg,” *The Atlanta Journal*, Dec. 7, 1901, GNMP vertical file 7-VA 7<sup>th</sup> Inf.
- <sup>150</sup> Hess, 166-67. Dressing left would result in closing gaps in that direction. Customarily a unit guided in the direction they dressed.
- <sup>151</sup> Norbonne Berkeley, 8<sup>th</sup> Virginia, undated, GNMP vertical file 7-VA 8<sup>th</sup> Inf.
- <sup>152</sup> Owen, “Pickett at Gettysburg,” 301-02.
- <sup>153</sup> Account of John Holmes Smith, 11th Virginia Infantry, on the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 2-3, 1863, *Supplement to the Official Records [OR]* 5, Addendum Reports 27 (Serial 43-44): 321. Filed with the John W. Daniel Papers, Manuscript Division, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.
- <sup>154</sup> Captain James R. Hutter, letter to J.W. Daniel, no date, filed with J.W. Daniel Papers, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.
- <sup>155</sup> Captain Robert G. Carter, “Personal Reminiscences of Gettysburg, December 12, 1903,” *The Gettysburg Papers* 2: 334.
- <sup>156</sup> *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War*, 309; *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):349. Sergeant William R. Ramsey, letter to Bachelder, April 16, 1883, in Ladd and Ladd, 2:951.
- <sup>157</sup> “Rebel Accounts of the Fifth.”
- <sup>158</sup> Hess, 176.
- <sup>159</sup> Finley, “With Pickett at Cemetery Ridge,” 307.
- <sup>160</sup> Hall, “With the Sixth Corps at Gettysburg,” 16.
- <sup>161</sup> Kathy Georg Harrison, *Nothing But Glory* (Gettysburg, Pa.: Thomas Publications, 2001), 129-30.
- <sup>162</sup> Hunton, 98-99.
- <sup>163</sup> Winfield Scott Hancock, March 22, 1864, *Testimony before Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1865), 408.
- <sup>164</sup> Howard, “Personal Reminiscences of the War of the Rebellion,” in *Fighting Them Over*, ed. Richard Sauers (Baltimore: Butternut and Blue, 1998), 180-82.
- <sup>165</sup> Brigadier General Alexander Hays, letter dated November 29, 1909, cited in George T. Fleming, Gilbert A. Hays, and Alexander Hays, *Life and Letter of Alexander Hays* (Pittsburgh: Alexander Street Press, 1919), 435.
- <sup>166</sup> Account of Captain David Shields, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry, on the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 3, 1863, *Supplement to the Official Records [OR]* 5, Addendum Reports 27 (Series Nos. 43-44): 167-68.
- <sup>167</sup> Benjamin F. Rittenhouse, “The Battle of Gettysburg as Seen from Little Round Top,” in *The Gettysburg Papers* 2 (1978): 526.
- <sup>168</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):884.
- <sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.
- <sup>170</sup> Unidentified soldier, July 9, 1863, GNMP vertical file V-7 24<sup>th</sup> Inf.
- <sup>171</sup> Account of Captain William T. Fry, Assistant Adjutant-General, Kemper’s Brigade, 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry, July 5, 1863, *Supplement to the Official Records [OR]*, 5, Addendum Reports, 27:306.
- <sup>172</sup> Finley, “Bloody Angle: The Story of Cemetery Ridge from the Blue and the Gray,” *Buffalo Evening News*, May 29, 1894, GNMP vertical file.
- <sup>173</sup> Thomas W. Hyde, *Recollections of the Battle of Gettysburg* (Portland, Maine: Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States [MOLLUS], Maine Commandery, 1898), 202.
- <sup>174</sup> Louis R. Fortesque, “Reminiscences,” GNMP vertical file.
- <sup>175</sup> Peyton, “Garnett’s Brigade at Gettysburg,” 216.
- <sup>176</sup> Finley, “With Pickett at Cemetery Ridge,” 308.
- <sup>177</sup> Owen, “Pickett at Gettysburg,” 300.
- <sup>178</sup> Bright, “Pickett’s Charge,” 230.
- <sup>179</sup> William Lochren, account recorded in William Watts Falwell Papers, filed at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.
- <sup>180</sup> W.D. Burtchaell, letter dated March 28, 1901, in *The Atlanta Journal*, March 30, 1901, 6.

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- <sup>181</sup> Edmund J. Rice, "Repelling Lee's Last Blow at Gettysburg," in Johnson and Buel, 3:387.
- <sup>182</sup> William R. Driver, "Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg" in *The Gettysburg Papers* 2: 894-95.
- <sup>183</sup> James Edward Kelly and William B. Styple, eds., *Generals in Bronze* (Kearney, N.J.: Belle Grove Publishing, 2005), 135.
- <sup>184</sup> Hyde, *Recollections*, 202.
- <sup>185</sup> Kemper, letter to Alexander, September 20, 1869.
- <sup>186</sup> Theodore Gates, letter to Bachelder, January 30, 1864, in Ladd and Ladd, 1:84-85.
- <sup>187</sup> Ralph Sturtevant, *Pictorial History of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment Vermont Volunteers* (Burlington, Vt.: The Self-Appointed Committee of Three, 1911), 260.
- <sup>188</sup> Journal of Major General Abner Doubleday, *Supplement—OR* 5, Addendum 27:118.
- <sup>189</sup> Hall, "With the Sixth Corps at Gettysburg," 16. This change of front, according to another Yankee, was "a quarter wheel to the right, advancing their left" (see L. A. Smith, "Recollections of Gettysburg," in *War Papers* [Detroit: MOLLUS, Michigan Commandery, James H. Stone, 1898], 304.)
- <sup>190</sup> "Graphic Story Told by Late Colonel Joseph C. Mayo, Third Virginia Regiment," *Times-Dispatch (Richmond)*, May 6, 1906.
- <sup>191</sup> George A. Bruce, *The Twentieth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry 1861-1865* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1906), 293.
- <sup>192</sup> Sturtevant, 301.
- <sup>193</sup> Benjamin H. Child, *From Fredericksburg to Gettysburg* (Providence, R.I.: Society, 1895), 30.
- <sup>194</sup> Kemper, letter to Alexander, September 20, 1869. GNMP vertical file 5-Kemper.
- <sup>195</sup> Charles T. Loehner, "The First Virginia at Gettysburg," *Times-Dispatch (Richmond)*, October 16, 1904, p. 34.
- <sup>196</sup> Kemper, letter to Swallow, February 4, 1880.
- <sup>197</sup> Walthall, 29.
- <sup>198</sup> Major Charles Pickett, undated letter, GNMP vertical file 5-Pickett
- <sup>199</sup> Alexander, Letter to Bachelder, May 3, 1876, in Ladd and Ladd, 1:490.
- <sup>200</sup> Colonel Joseph C. Mayo, "Wilcox's Alabama Brigade at Gettysburg," *Confederate Veteran* 17 (1909): 230.
- <sup>201</sup> Wilcox "Letter from General C.M. Wilcox," 116-17.
- <sup>202</sup> Wilcox, *The United Service*, 379.
- <sup>203</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(2):620. Wilcox later commented that "the wheel to the left had thrown the greater part of [Pickett's division] beyond the turnpike," suggesting that Garnett's left, not as close to the Federal line, was still somewhat visible near the Codori homestead (see also Wilcox, *The United Service*, 379).
- <sup>204</sup> Journal of Doubleday, 27:118.
- <sup>205</sup> Frank Moran, "A New View of Gettysburg," *The (Philadelphia) Times*, April 22, year not specified, GNMP vertical file.
- <sup>206</sup> Major General John Newton, September 11, 1863, *O.R. Supplement* I, 5:122.
- <sup>207</sup> Taylor, "Memorandum by Colonel Walter H. Taylor," 85.
- <sup>208</sup> Lafayette McLaws, "Gettysburg," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 7 (February 1879): 79-80. McLaws also asserted that as to Ewell having been ordered to assail the enemy's right at the same time, "I never heard that such was even contemplated."
- <sup>209</sup> Longstreet, "Lee in Pennsylvania," 431.
- <sup>210</sup> Extracts from letters written by Dr. R. W. Martin to Rev. James Poindexter, "Armistead At The Battle Of Gettysburg," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 39 (April 1914): 186-87.
- <sup>211</sup> Kemper, letter to Swallow, February 4, 1880.
- <sup>212</sup> *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):884.
- <sup>213</sup> Wilcox, *The United Service*, 380.
- <sup>214</sup> Clifford Dowdey, ed., *The Wartime Papers of Robert E. Lee* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 1987), 565.
- <sup>215</sup> Longstreet, "General Longstreet's Second Paper on Gettysburg," 258.
- <sup>216</sup> Early, "Causes of the Defeat of General Lee's Army," 60.